

Abstract

Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a global pandemic afflicting individuals, households and economies across the globe. Data abounds to the realization that HIV/AIDS discordant couples administer Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to mitigate further exposure and infection risk. Studies have been done on Knowledge, as a key aspect in PrEP management among discordant couples. In Kitui West Sub County however, there is paucity of studies on knowledge on PrEP among discordant couples. The specific objective of this study was to examine awareness levels of serodiscordant couples towards the use of PrEP in HIV/AIDS prevention and transmission. The study was guided by Health Belief Model theory which explains and predicts health related behaviors in regard to the uptake of health services or intervention strategies. It was a qualitative research by design and focused on serodiscordant couples in Kitui West Sub County. The target population was 68 with a sample population of 28 couples. The study utilized qualitative research tools which included a questionnaire, key informant interviews, In-depth interviews, physical observation, and photography for data collection. Data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Science to generate descriptive statistics, presented in tables, charts and graphs in a bid to arrive at conclusions and recommendations. Data obtained from key informants was analyzed thematically and presented in form of narratives that were used to provide answers to the study's research question. The findings indicated a moderate PrEP awareness level among the target population. There was found erroneous knowledge which did not aid PrEP implementation and administration but created myths and conspiracy theories against the drug. There was prevalent belief among the target beneficiaries of PrEP therapy was an agenda of international governments and drug manufacturers to continually ensure infection existed in poor countries and to create a consistent trade, business and profit for the drug makers at the expense of the poor consumers. Thus, PrEP implementation in Kitui West Sub County has not been fully adopted by the eligible clients and there was need for concerted effort that should include Public Private Partnership, to create adequate awareness and knowledge on the successful uptake of PrEP. Therefore, (i) there was need for urgent correction of the prevailing erroneous information among the study population by adopting a PrEP promotion strategy which targets provision of correct, free and easy to understand information to debunk the prevailing myths and theories. This would be done through psycho-social support groups, (ii) PrEP trainers and promoters should be persons under a PrEP program because target beneficiaries would

find it easy to believe them (iii) PrEP content should be translated and presented in local Kamba language