

## Abstract

**Introduction:** The acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) epidemic is the greatest challenge to human kind in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Over 35.5 million people are infected with Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) worldwide and the majority of these infections are in the reproductive age group. Mother to Child Transmission (MTCT) of HIV infections is high especially in sub-Saharan Africa despite improvements in PMTCT services over the years. In 2006 there were 2.3 million children under 15 years living with HIV, and approximately 530,000 children were newly infected with HIV through mother to child transmission of the virus. A child dies of AIDS nearly every minute of every day.

**Objective:** To assess knowledge and attitude on prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV among pregnant women attending antenatal clinic in Kisii general hospital.

**Methodology:** An institution-based cross-sectional study was conducted among pregnant mothers attending antenatal care clinic at Kisii general hospital from February to April, 2014. A systematic random sampling technique was used to select the 328 respondents. Data were collected through structured pre-tested questionnaire. The data were then summarized into SPSS version 20.0, for windows and analyzed. Chi-square was used to calculate the association between, education, Occupation and age against knowledge on prevention of mother to child transmission.

**Findings:** The findings from the study showed that there was an association between the knowledge on PMTCT and Occupation ( $P = 0.05$ ). A big number (52%) of the mothers did not know about PMTCT services which were being offered in the hospital. The study showed that the knowledge on PMTCT was associated to the age ( $P = 0.02$ ). It was noted that respondents who had little or no knowledge of the services were mostly below 25 years of age and those with low education levels ( $P = 0.01$ ). On the attitude towards PMTCT services it was found that three-quarters (77%) reported that it is good to take on PMTCT services if reactive and quarter (23%) of respondents reported that PMTCT services are wastage of time because AIDS has no cure.

Challenges that affect the PMTCT program include stigma still surrounding HIV and AIDS as a disease, which has led to 210 (64%) of the mothers not willing to know their status.

**Conclusion:** The utilization of the PMTCT services were affected by the low levels of HIV testing. The insufficient knowledge on PMTCT coupled with the negative attitude towards HIV testing, fear and stigma towards HIV and AIDS contributed to the low utilization of PMTCT

services in Kisii level 5 Hospital in Kisii County.

Recommendation: The study recommends working in collaboration with all stakeholders to improve and increase on the sensitization and awareness to the communities on what PMTCT program is all about and what it entails. There is need to do a qualitative study to find out if the information given during counseling is enough and useful to pregnant women and to see if more counseling session are needed for pregnant women during antenatal visits.