

**August 2011**  
**Issue 29****MCC News**

An e-newsletter about male circumcision for HIV prevention in Kenya

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People watch a video about medical male circumcision outside a dispensary where the procedure is being offered at night.

*Photo by Kenneth Owino Odiwuor*

**Fisher communities benefit from “moonlight” services**

It is ten o'clock at night, and Ndeda Island is bustling with people going about their business. At the beachfront, fishermen prepare for another fishing expedition. In a poorly lit bar, men and women drink as they dance to music blaring from a strategically placed sound system.

And at the local dispensary, men of various ages sit patiently on a bench. Paul Juma, 35, is one of them. Tonight, he says, he has finally come to the health facility to get circumcised. “I have been waiting to be circumcised, but I am a fisherman, and most of the time when these services are offered, I am away,” he said. “But now at night, I have some little time, and I decided to come and get circumcised.”

Juma is one of many men on this tiny island and in the other fishing communities of Bondo District in Kenya's Nyanza Province who are benefitting from a decision by the government and its partners to provide voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) services at night.

“There are people like fishermen who would want to get circumcised, but because the services are offered when they are not available, it becomes hard for them to get it,” explained Ronnie Odiwuor-Asino, the Nyanza Reproductive Health Society's coordinator for medical male circumcision in Bondo District. “So, ‘moonlight’ male circumcision services are an innovative approach that will ensure they get the services not only closer to them, but in a convenient manner.”

Since December 2010, the services have been offered along various beach sites in Bondo from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Reaching men in Nyanza's fishing communities is a high priority for the programme because they have high rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. The *Kenya HIV Prevention and Modes of Transmission Analysis 2009* estimates that 25 percent of all new infections in the province may be occurring in fishing communities.

The report calls for more research on the factors that contribute to the high risk of HIV infection among fishermen and others living in fishing communities. It says that these factors may include “the mobile nature of their occupation, the availability of commercial sex, low levels of condom use and certain cultural practices,” such as *jaboya*, the custom of fishermen demanding sex from women fish traders in exchange for fish.

Since the introduction of moonlight services in the Bondo fishing communities, 693 men have been circumcised at night.

Zephaniah Opiyo, a clinical surgeon, says he sees far more VMMC clients at night than during the day. “There are nights that I have managed to circumcise up to 41 men,” he said. “The queue is long, as you can see.”

Providers report that the turnout for male circumcision among men 30 and older, in particular, is higher at night than it is during the day.

Many older men prefer to be circumcised at night, when people they consider “children” do not see them, explained Mercy Atieno, a community mobiliser. “A man of 40 years will tell you he cannot queue on a bench with a young person to be circumcised together,” she said. “This is one of the major reasons for higher

turnout of older men for moonlight circumcision services.”

Offering moonlight services is among the strategies that have helped put Kenya at the forefront of efforts to expand access to medical male circumcision for HIV prevention in sub-Saharan Africa. So far, more than 318,000 boys and men have been circumcised in Kenya. The government aims to reach 80 percent of all uncircumcised men, or 860,000, by 2013 as part of its HIV prevention strategy.

### **Community forum to review male circumcision progress**

Hundreds of people will participate in a community forum about the government’s voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) programme on 9 September at Tom Mboya Labour College in Kisumu.

The forum is the fourth VMMC stakeholders’ meeting in Nyanza Province convened by the national and provincial task forces on male circumcision for HIV prevention.

A speech by the prime minister at the second of these forums, held in Kisumu in September 2008, paved the way for the launch of the VMMC programme two months later. In a highly influential speech, the Right Honourable Prime Minister Raila Odinga encouraged the men of Nyanza Province to consider medical male circumcision for HIV prevention even though they are from a community that traditionally does not circumcise.

Since then, more than 318,000 men and boys have been circumcised and have received related HIV prevention services through the VMMC programme. About 284,000 of those clients were from Nyanza, where the programme began; the rest were reached through the expansion of the programme to Nairobi, Turkana, Kericho and Teso in 2010-11.

Kenya is considered an international leader among the African countries that are implementing male circumcision for HIV prevention, accounting for more than 40 percent of the medical male circumcisions performed in all 14 countries over the past three years.

The 9 September meeting offers an opportunity for the community to discuss the lessons from this experience and the challenges facing the programme as it moves into its fourth year. More than 400 people have been invited to participate, representing women’s groups, youth groups, faith-based organisations, professional caucuses, social groups and community-based organisations.

Kenya’s Minister of Public Health and Sanitation has been invited to give the

keynote speech at the forum.

## **Male circumcision in the news**

### **Male cut delight**

NTV, 14 August

### **Study: Circumcised men having more protected sex**

*The Standard*, August 4

### **Male circumcision lowers prevalence of penile precancerous lesions among African men, study finds**

*ScienceDaily*, 28 July

## **Resources**

### **The Clearinghouse on Male Circumcision for HIV Prevention**

Developed by the World Health Organization, AVAC, and FHI 360, this Web site is a comprehensive source of information and resources about male circumcision for HIV prevention.

**The Male Circumcision Consortium (MCC)** works with the Government of Kenya and other partners—including the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which supports service delivery—to prevent HIV and save lives by expanding access to safe and voluntary male circumcision services. FHI 360, EngenderHealth, and the University of Illinois at Chicago, working with the Nyanza Reproductive Health Society, are partners in the Consortium, which is funded by a grant to FHI from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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**Please send questions or comments to Silas Achar at: [mccinfo@fhi.org](mailto:mccinfo@fhi.org); also, please indicate whether you want to continue receiving this e-newsletter regularly.**