

April 2009
Issue 3

MCC News

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

In this issue:

Outreach Expands Access to Male Circumcision

Circumcision Reduces Risk of Herpes and HPV

UNIM Centre Completes Quality Assessment

Male Circumcision in the News

Resources



Tents are erected within a health facility compound, like this one in Maseno, to serve as counseling, waiting, and recovery rooms during outreach visits to provide male circumcision and other HIV prevention services. Photo by Ren Kolka.

Outreach expands access to male circumcision

Integrating male circumcision services into health services that already face staff shortages is one of the biggest challenges for the government's initiative to expand access to safe, voluntary male circumcision.

Now healthcare providers at public facilities are working with partners in Nyanza Province to help meet the increasing demand for male circumcision in health centres that do not have adequate staff or space to provide these services regularly.

They do so through an outreach strategy in which trained teams of health workers from nearby health facilities converge at a health centre for a few days to provide free male circumcision services.

These outreach visits are carefully planned to ensure that regular health services at the chosen facility are not interrupted. Members of the outreach team perform the circumcisions, while the health workers on the facility staff attend to clients seeking other health services. (The facility staff also participates in providing male circumcision services when they are not busy serving other clients.)

A few days before the outreach services begin, community health workers and volunteers fan out into the community to inform people that male circumcision services will be provided at the facility on certain days.

On the first day of the outreach services, tents are set up in the health facility compound. These tents serve as private counselling rooms and also as places where clients can wait before circumcision and rest after the procedure. Specific rooms are prepared for conducting the surgeries.

The response to the outreach visits has been overwhelming, says George Odingo of EngenderHealth, a research officer with the Male Circumcision Consortium. During a recent outreach visit to Kandiege Health Centre in Rachuonyo District, about 40 clients were circumcised in three days.

Odingo is a lead investigator in a study that assesses the feasibility of male circumcision services at outreach health facilities in Nyanza. The findings will be used to determine whether to adopt an outreach strategy and, if so, how to implement that strategy to make male circumcision services more accessible throughout Kenya.

Circumcision reduces risk of herpes and HPV

Circumcision reduced the risk of two sexually transmitted infections — human papillomavirus (HPV) and herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) — among men in a **study** published in the 26 March issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

The study analyzed data on HSV-2, HPV, and syphilis among men participating in the randomised controlled trial (RCT) of male circumcision for HIV prevention in Rakai, Uganda. It found that the circumcised men had a 25 percent reduced risk of infection with HSV-2 and a 35 percent reduced risk of HPV. Circumcision did not affect the men's risk of acquiring syphilis.

These results confirm the findings from analyses of data collected during the randomised trial of male circumcision and HIV in Orange Farm, South Africa. In this study being circumcised reduced men's risk of acquiring HSV-2 by about 55 percent, and it lowered by one-third the prevalence of strains of HPV that have

been linked with a high risk of genital cancer (*The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, **1 April 2009** and **1 January 2009**).

Together, this evidence that male circumcision is partially protective against HSV-2 and HPV should prompt “a major reassessment” of its role in preventing sexually transmitted infections, according to an accompanying **editorial**.

The data on HSV-2 and HPV add to the already compelling arguments for supporting male circumcision in areas with a high prevalence of heterosexually transmitted HIV, write Dr. Matthew Golden and Dr. Judith Wasserheit. In countries with relatively low HIV prevalence, policymakers will need to estimate and carefully consider the potential costs and public health benefits of making the procedure more widely available.

UNIM Centre completes quality assessment

The UNIM Research and Training Centre conducted a two-week internal assessment that was guided by a tool kit recently published by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The *Male Circumcision Services Quality Assessment Toolkit* was developed to help facility managers and healthcare providers identify ways to improve the quality of their services. It is designed to be used with the WHO guidance on quality assurance for male circumcision. (See **Resources**, below, for links to both documents.) A team from WHO field-tested the tool kit at UNIM and other sites, and UNIM staff contributed to its development.

In the next stage, UNIM will use the tool kit to assess its mobile training teams and will work with government health workers to determine how to enhance the quality of the male circumcision services offered in their facilities.

Male circumcision in the news

Circumcision is found to curb two S.T.D.'s

The New York Times, 26 March 2009

South Africa considers male circumcision as part of HIV prevention plan

Online NewsHour, 20 March 2009

Resources

Male Circumcision Quality Assurance Guide

This guide from WHO is designed to help programme and health facility managers at all levels of a health system establish male circumcision services that meet internationally recognized levels of safety and quality.

Male Circumcision Services Quality Assessment Toolkit

This set of practical tools from WHO can be used along with the *Male Circumcision Quality Assurance Guide* to help programme and facility managers design male circumcision services or improve current services. It can also be used by external evaluators to certify or accredit facilities.

www.malecircumcision.org

The Clearinghouse on Male Circumcision for HIV Prevention is an online global resource on male circumcision research, programme implementation, documentation, and information.

The Male Circumcision Consortium (MCC) works with the Government of Kenya and other partners to prevent HIV and save lives by expanding access to safe and voluntary male circumcision services. Family Health International (FHI), the University of Illinois at Chicago, and EngenderHealth are partners in the Consortium, which is funded by a grant to FHI from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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