

Effect of mHealth Utilization on Access to Treatment by Teenagers Living with HIV/AIDS in Island Communities of Lake Victoria, Kenya

Exclusion from structural and biomedical interventions, concerns with privacy and confidentiality, location and hours of operation of health facilities, cost of services, coupled with retrogressive beliefs and attitudes of health providers, are barriers to seeking health services by teenagers living with HIV/AIDS. To bridge the gap, mHealth attempts to ensure care and treatment for teenagers. Despite scaling up of mHealth, over 500 pilot studies have not indicated evidence of impact for sustainability. Due to limited resources for technology in healthcare, discourse on HIV/AIDS epidemic now transcends beyond access and utilization to sustainability of healthcare. The study sought to determine the effect of mHealth utilization by teenagers living with HIV among island communities of Lake Victoria on access to treatment. It characterized mHealth access and determined knowledge management affecting utilization by teenagers living with HIV, as supported by Theory of Reasoned Action, Knowledge Management Process Model, and Technology Adoption Lifecycle Model. Anchored on cross-sectional study design, stratified sampling identified the psychosocial support groups of teenagers living with HIV. Of the study population of 409 in Ringiti, Remba, Rusinga, Mfangano and Mageta islands, 173 teenagers living with HIV as unit of analysis, and a control group made up of 30 percent of the sample were sampled. Five focus group discussions and key informant interviews of 10 and 3 were held in each Island. Results showed that Characterization of mHealth access and Knowledge Management had a positive and significant effect on access to treatment by teenagers living with HIV/AIDS in Island communities of Lake Victoria. The study recommended that government and organizations involved in HIV/AIDS related activities should adopt a culture of enhancing mHealth, to ensure improved access to treatment by teenagers living with HIV/AIDS in Island communities of Lake Victoria.

Key words

Characterization of mHealth access, Knowledge Management, Teenagers, HIV/AIDS

Primary author: OLANG' P. A., BILL OKAKA (PhD Scholar, Development Studies, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya)

Co-authors: Dr MWAURA, Florence Ondieki- (Senior Lecturer, Department of Development Studies, School of Communication and Development Studies Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)); Prof. SAKWA., Maurice (2Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya)