

Door-to-door HIV Counseling and testing (HTC) as a recruitment strategy for 052 HIV discordant couples study at UNC Project, Lilongwe, Malawi.

Zimba C¹, Kandikole L¹, Mphonda S¹, Chisale B¹, Mwese J¹, Kazembe R¹, Maseko B¹, Maliwichi M¹, Kadiwa M¹, Kumwenda W¹, Hoffman P, Martinson F¹, Hosseinipour M¹.

¹ UNC Project, Lilongwe Malawi ²University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC ,
Contact: czimba@unclilongwe.org.mw. Web: <http://www.id.unc.edu/malawi/>

Background

Door-to-door is a community based HTC approach adopted by the Malawi Ministry of Health in 2007 to increase the uptake of HTC. UNC Project started door-to-door HTC in May 2008 to increase the uptake of couples accessing the test. Door-to-door's aim was to identify HIV discordant couples for recruitment into HPTN 052 study. HPTN 052 is a multi-center study designed to determine if antiretroviral therapy can reduce transmission of HIV. UNC Project enrolled 251 HIV discordant couples who are actively in follow-up.

Methodology

UNC Project research center identified the at-risk, underserved areas through community involvement.

- We educated the chiefs of the research areas on HIV and AIDS including HIV sero-discordance.
- We mapped the areas to determine the workforce required.
- The chief was responsible for informing the area of the event.
- UNC Project staff reinforced the message through community meetings.
- On the agreed date, the door-to-door team comprising of VCT and Nurse Counselors met the chief.
- Thereafter, commenced the door-to door HIV testing and Counseling.

Method of HIV testing:

- Individual and couples counseling were conducted .
- The test was conducted at a place convenient to the client.
- Standard rapid HIV tests were used.
 - Determine HIV ,Unigold HIV and Bioline.
- All testing data was recorded in the Ministry of Health HTC registers.
- HIV positive clients were referred to HIV care and treatment programmes.
- HIV discordant couples were referred to HPTN 052 HIV sero-discordant study at UNC Project.



One of the areas where door-to-door HTC was conducted

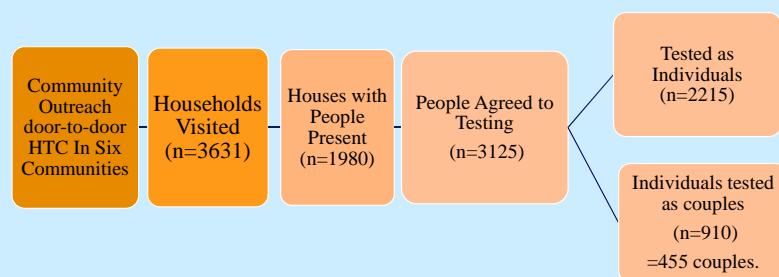


Couples' HTC conducted at home.

Results

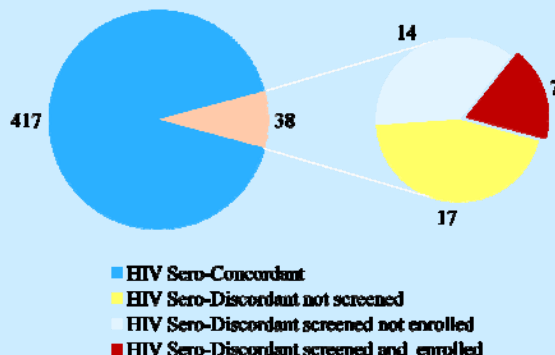
Key Findings

From October 2008 to August 2009,



- 54.5% of the visited houses had people present.
- 29% of the people who agreed to HIV testing were tested as couples
- 8.4% of the couples tested, had HIV sero-discordant results.

Couples Screening and Enrollment (n=455 Couples)



Of the 7 discordant couples enrolled, 4 (57%) males were positive and 3 (43%) females were positive

Conclusions and recommendations

- HIV sero-discordance is common (8.4%) in Lilongwe district. Uptake of HTC among individuals is higher than couples. Only 29% of the individuals agreed to HIV couples' counseling and testing during the door to door HTC activities. Couples HTC requires improvement even with the door-to-door model.
- There is need to strategize on the days of door-to door HTC in order to find people at home since only 54.5% of the houses had people present.

Acknowledgments

HPTN 052 Study at UNC Project is sponsored by the HIV Prevention Trials Network with support from the NIH/NIAID. Thanks to UNC Project study team: The PI, coordinator, Clinic staff, Transport personnel and Community Educators for taking part in conduction of door-to-door HTC activities . Finally and most especially, all clients who agreed to be tested at their homes.

