

# Challenges and achievements in HIV Disclosure for children in MSF France Mathare program in Kenya

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Kenya Associations of Professional Counsellors Conference  
September 2009

# Background

- **Medecins Sans Frontieres France runs an HIV clinic in the Mathare slums since 2001.**
- **In the paediatric HIV positive population, only 2% of caregivers tell their children of his/her HIV status.**
- **We explore the attitudes of caregivers towards HIV disclosure.**

# Methods

- **Between Septembers to December 2008, caregivers that had not disclosed HIV diagnosis to their children were flagged and were reminded and assisted by the counsellors to do so.**
- **The patients' files of the children coming to the HIV clinic in that period of time were reviewed.**

# Disclosure

**Make known**

**Reveal**

**Expose to view**

**In this case, disclosure of HIV status**

# Why is disclosure Important

- **Issues regarding when and how to tell pediatrics patients of their diagnoses in cases of serious chronic or terminal illness can present many challenges to health Professional and parents/ guardians alike**
- **Literature in the field of pediatrics oncology suggest that disclosing illness status can have Positive effects such as reduction of anxiety in both the child and parent / guardian**

# Continues

- Improves family functioning and long term gains in psychosocial adjustment
- Greater ability to cope and provide support to each other especially as the disease progresses
- Adolescent need to be informed about their illness to assist in their own care and reduce the risk of transmitting the infection to others through unprotected sex or drug abuse

# Key findings

- Of the 357 active children in the program, 73 (20%) are children between the ages of 1 to 5 years.
- 145 (41%) are children between 6 to 10 years.
- 122 (34%) are children between 11 to 15 years.
- 17 (5%) children were at the age of 16 to 17 years.

# Continues

- **Sixty-two (43%) children of the ages of 6 to 10 years with the assistance of the counsellors were started on partial disclosure.**
- **18 (15%) of ages 11 to 15 were started on the same.**
- **A total number of 136 (38%) children out of 357 had been assisted to fully be aware of their HIV Status.**

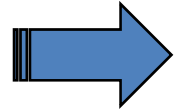


# Case studies

- **Disclosure of HIV status to children**

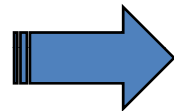
# Accidental Disclosure: Case 1

Kaingu



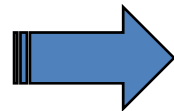
**13 year old male, mother  
not tested**

Disclosure



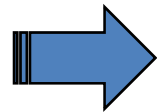
**at the Pharmacy**

Reaction



**anger, refused to take  
drugs, wept bitterly**

Feelings



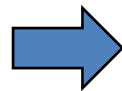
**betrayed by mother**

# Accidental Disclosure: Case 2

- Angle → 13 year old female, mother died
- Disclosure → Doctor's room
- Reaction → painfully sobbing

# Planned Disclosure: Case 1

- M.K → 10 year old male, mother died of AIDS, Suspicious but in fear & denial
- Counselling → M.K taken through pre-test counselling, tested and post-test counselling & disclosure
- Reaction → M.K delayed expression of feelings, act strongly to protect mother
- Post Disclosure → seeing trained child counsellor.



# Planned Disclosure: Case 2

- Betty → 13 year old female, mother died
- Counselling → Betty introduced to issues of her illness, requested to think about them. Went for pre-test counselling after 3 weeks
- Reactions → Betty wept a lot  
Bitter with aunties but very grateful to the counsellor
- Post Disclosure → Well adjusted

# Reasons Why parents did not disclose to children

- Fear that the child will not keep secret
- Fear that the child and the family will suffer from discrimination and possible physical harm if the child indiscriminately discloses
- Fear that the Child will ask difficult questions
- Concerns that the stress of diagnosis will have ill effects on the child's health

# Observed Impact in non-disclosure Children

- Children that were not disclosed of their HIV status suffered from confusion, isolation, depression and mistrust
- Non-disclosure can also deprive HIV Positive Children of supportive care services available to their counter parts who know their sero-status e.g participation in youth and / Peer support groups

# Recommendations

- **There is a need to help and train caregivers especially counsellors , parents and children prepare for HIV disclosure**
- **Parents intended to disclose HIV diagnosis to their children but have poor preparation and knowledge on the issue.**



# Acknowledgements

- **Expert Patients**
- **All Patients in the program**
- **Counsellors in Mathare program**
- **Medical team**
- **Coordination and field team**

**Thank you for  
listening**