

Increasing access to HIV Testing Services (HTS) and Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for males aged 15 to 35 years through men's clinic: The Case of USAID Zambia Integrated Health

Authors: Memory Kachimbe¹, Musole Chiteta¹, Patrick Saili¹, Dr. Moono Hansombo¹, Melody Mwanja¹, Dr. Mwanza Wa Mwanza¹, Dr. Albert Kaonga¹, Dr. Morrison Zulu¹, Dr. Elijah Sinyinza¹, Paul Chishimba¹, Daniel Kazimoto², Matthews Ndandanda², Chanda Mwenya², Chilufya Mwelwa², Darius Sikanyika¹ and James Mtonga¹ on behalf of the USAID Zambia Integrated Health Project Team, PACT

¹USAID Zambia Integrated Health

²Ministry of Health

BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

- According to the Zambia Population Based HIV/AIDS Impact assessment Report (ZAMPHIA, 2021), 86.6% of males (15+ years) are aware of their HIV status as compared to the 89.9% of women (15+ years).
- In 2023, USAID Zambia Integrated Health began supporting Central, Copperbelt and Northwestern Provinces of Zambia in improving the uptake and utilization of HIV, TB, Maternal, neonatal and Child health services in 330 health facilities.
- Two of the supported provinces have the largest gap in HIV diagnosis among men 15+ years. For instance, while the national average for the first UNAIDS 95 on knowing one's HIV status is at 86.6% among males 15+, Central and Northwestern provinces are at 78.8% and 76.6%, respectively.
- The project is sharing a best practice observed over the last 7 months of implementing men's clinic aimed at improving access to HTS and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) among males aged 15 to 35 years in three (3) supported health facilities.

The main objective of the implementation is to improve access and uptake of HTS and PrEP in outpatient settings among men aged 15 to 35 years

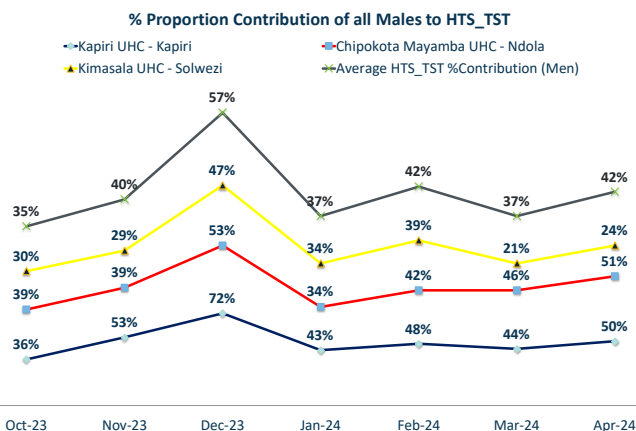
METHODS

- A total of 26 out of 330 supported health facilities implemented men's clinics as either stand-alone or fast track.
- Programmatic data on uptake of HTS and PrEP among men aged 15 to 35 years for the period October 2023 to April 2024 from three implementing health facilities (Chipokota Mayamba, Kapiri Urban and Kimasala Urban) was analysed and is presented below.

RESULTS

1. During the period October 2023 to April 2024 a total of 15,959 individuals underwent HTS out of which 7,136 were males aged 15 and above. The figure below shows that there was an increase in the proportion of men aged 15+ undergoing HTS (black line) from an average of 35% in October 2023, peaking at 57% in December 2023 before dropping to 42% (still above baseline) in April 2024. The drop is attributed to stock imbalance in HIV test kits.

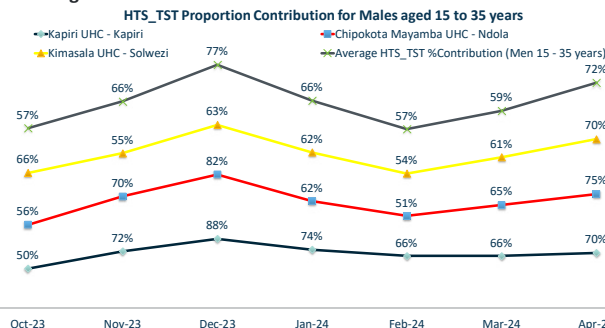
Figure 1: HTS_TST percentage contribution of all males to overall testing by month



RESULTS CONTINUED

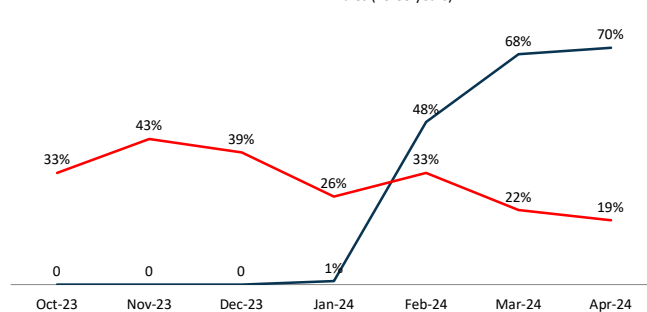
2. The total number of males aged 15 to 35 tested in October 2023 at the three facilities was 226 representing 57% of all males tested (Black line). This proportion peaked in December 2023 at 77% and later stood at 72% in April 2024. All the three facilities experienced a similar trend over the period.

Figure 2: HTS_TST percentage contribution of Males aged 15 to 35 years to all male testing



3. Regarding Uptake of PrEP among males aged 15 to 35 years there was no improvement in absolute numbers accessing the service. However, the percentage contribution reduced as PrEP uptake increased among Pregnant and Breast-Feeding Women as well as among other populations (adolescent girls and young women, males above 35 years) in the three health facilities.

PrEP Uptake % Contribution by Population Type



DISCUSSION

- Men's clinics that provide male friendly services improved access to HTS for males 15 to 35 years.
- Implementation of men's clinics did not, however, improve uptake of PrEP among men aged 15 to 35 years
- HIV test kit stock imbalance affected uptake of HTS across all age groups in January, February and March. However, testing improved in March 2024.
- The peak in performance noted in December is additionally attributed to increased demand creation from the road shows and VMMC campaigns that targeted males in all three provinces.

CONCLUSION

- Integrating other services such as STI screening and management, VMMC and reproductive health services within the men's clinic attracts men for those services and provides an entry point to HTS.
- More innovative approaches are needed to improve uptake of PrEP among men

