

RHSP NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

MADDU HEALTH CENTRE HANDOVER

On 5 Feb 2019 RHSP officially handed over the newly renovated Maddu HCIV theatre to the district leadership of Gomba. This project was supported by PEPFAR and shall support maternity services in reducing maternal deaths in the district.



Gomba district leaders; RDC - Sabiiti Ruth Kashaka; LCV CHAIRMAN - Godfrey Kiviiri; CAO - Dison Iga and other guests cutting the ribbon into the theatre.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

- **Headache prevalence and its functional impact among HIV-infected adults in rural Rakai District, Uganda.**
January 2019 - *Journal of NeuroVirology*
- **Alcohol use in fishing communities and men's willingness to participate in an alcohol, violence and HIV risk reduction intervention: qualitative findings from Rakai, Uganda .**
April 2019 - *Culture Health & Sexuality*
- **Pregnancy Incidence and Fertility Desires Among Couples by HIV Status in Rakai, Uganda.**
April 2019 - *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 80(5):1
- **Effect of HIV Subtype and Antiretroviral therapy on HIV-associated neurocognitive disorder (HAND) stage in Rakai, Uganda.**
February 2019 - *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes*



WORD FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BY DR JOSEPH KAGAAYI

Am glad to present our first issue of the RHSP newsletter. It is my sincere hope that this and other upcoming similar publications will keep you informed on our progress on programmatic and research activities. We are working diligently to meet our targets in the 12 districts of Masaka region. We are excited about our achievements in retention of patients in HIV care, improvements in TB programming and layering within our DREAMS program. We look forward to starting to track patients using unique identifiers. We believe this will help improve our measurement of our linkage and retention in care. RHSP has also received 3 research grants including implementation sciences research to improve utilization treatment and HIV preventive services among migrants; a grant to reach hard-to-reach populations for sexual behavior characterization and incidence testing with services; and a training grant from Forgaty to offer Bachelors, Masters and PhD training to young Ugandan scientists interested in the field of HIV. I hope you will find this issue interesting.



WELCOME INCOMING NEIGHBOR

Through analysis of the Rakai Community Cohort Study (RCCS) data, we discovered that persons who come into study communities as immigrants have poor access to important health care and prevention services. Particularly, HIV+ in-migrants (defined as persons migrating into the community within the past 36 months) had poor access to Antiretroviral therapy services and while HIV- men had poor access to medically performed male circumcision among other HIV care access challenges. In effect, within their first 36 months of stay in the community, HIV- 'in-migrants' have disproportionately higher risk of acquiring HIV than the old residents. RHSP introduces the WIN study whose goal shall be a community randomized controlled trial that will test the efficacy of a rapid outreach intervention to new in-migrants; and to operationalize rapid linkage to HIV treatment and prevention services thereby contributing to HIV epidemic control. We are testing to see if among in-migrants in intervention arm communities, HIV incidence will decline to ~0.85/100 py vs ~1.55/100 py among in-migrants in the control arm; among HIV+ in-migrants, VL suppression will increase to ~75% vs ~37% in the intervention arm compared to the control arm.



A total of 35 participants were trained for 2 weeks and are ready to roll out the study in Rakai district.



Prof. Marla Wawer - Principal Investigator of WIN study with some participants after the training

MASAKA DISTRICT OFFICE HANDOVER

RHSP has worked very closely with Masaka district through the District Health Officer, Dr Stuart Musisi to implement health related program activities in HIV prevention, care and treatment. His effort in improving health services in the district for about 20 years necessitated renovation of his working space which commenced in March 2019 and was officially handed over on 12 March 2019 to the district leadership team.



Masaka LC5 Chairman Jude Moabali with other officials cutting the ribbon into the DHO's office.



Masaka DHO Dr. Stuart Musisi with officials from RHSP in his newly renovated office.



Principal Investigators - Mark Baron, Phillip Li and Dr Han and co-investigators for the EIMC study (Shang ring vs Mogen clamp in early infant male circumcision) paid a courtesy visit to Ugandan field sites to do support supervision, monitoring/ assessment of the study activities progress. While at RHSP, together with the Research Director - Dr Godfrey Kigozi, they visited Kakuuto Health center IV and they were impressed with the study activities .

DIALOGUE WITH PRISON HEADS



After signing a Memorandum Of Understanding with Uganda Prison Services in July 2018, RHSP is mandated to conduct HIV testing & counselling; and Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision activities among prisoners and prison staff in the 12 districts of Masaka regional HIV mechanism. RHSP had dialogue with Prison Heads to ensure that all these services are continually accessed.

NATIONAL PMTCT IMPACT EVALUATION IN FINAL STAGES

This study has been following up enrolled mothers to find out: How many mothers transmit HIV to their babies by 6 weeks after birth and by 18 months after birth. And also to find out what the infant mortality rate is among babies born to HIV+ mothers. Data has been collected and analysis is ongoing. RHSP is an implementing partner with Ministry of Health funded by CDC and UN agencies in this study which will change policy both locally and globally in the fight against the HIV epidemic. Watchout for the study report in June.

DHO FORUM MEETING



RHSP being an Implementing Partner in 12 districts of Masaka region works very closely with District Health Officers in order to implement various activities. In february a DHO forum routine meeting was held in which performance was assessed. Addressing challenges and jointly looking for solutions to these challenges so as to improve service provision was a priority.

RHSP Project Manager - Rapheal Ssozi - presenting to DHOs from Masaka region.



DREAMS SCHOOL GIRL EMPOWERMENT

DREAMS project supported about 5,000 school girls in 9-10 districts with scholastic materials. Girls' school attendance are hindered by; lack of sanitary pads, and educational materials like; books, pens, pencils, mathematical sets, ruler and ream of paper which their parents find costly to provide. These materials may seem small but they are pivotal for the educational nature of a rural school girls in Masaka region. in the photos are RHSP staff working with the DREAMS project handing out these scholastic materials to girls from; St Marys SS, Sanje; Lugonza Primary School and Holy Family of Nazareth School. This reachout activity which was started in 2017 and is done every school term has empowered many adolescent girls and kept them in school.



CROI PRESENTATION



Dr Godfrey Kigozi, Dr Joseph Kagaayi and Dr Gertrude Nakigozi

Dr Joseph Kagaayi on behalf of RHSP presented findings of the study on 'Acceptability and Retention of Clients on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) in South Western Uganda' at the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in March 2019. The study found that there was high acceptability of PrEP in this population however retention on PrEP declined rapidly following

enrollment with differentials by risk category. based on the evidence of this study, it was concluded that differentiated targeted interventions and distribution systems to optimize PrEP retention will be critical to the success of PrEP programs in this setting.

CROI is an international platform that brings together top basic, translational, and clinical researchers from around the world to share the latest studies, important developments, and best research methods in the ongoing battle against HIV/AIDS and related infectious diseases.

VOLUNTARY MEDICAL MALE CIRCUMCISION (VMMC) TRAINING



Regional Manager VMMC - Nehemiah Kighoma handing over certificates to trainees upon completion of the training.

RHSP trained a total of 23 medical personnel in different VMMC skills. The training which ran from 25th February 2019 to 6th March 2019 attracted participants from; Kalangala, Masaka, Lwengo, Kalungu, Kyotera, Wakiso and Kampala. Trainees acquired specialized skills as Circumcisers, Theatre Assistants and Counselors.



Trainees carrying out surgical circumcision procedure.

APPOINTMENTS



JOAN NANKYA was promoted as the new HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER. She brings on board 10 years of experience from working with brands like; Barclays bank, TASO and Crystal Clear Software where she has previously worked. She is pursuing a Masters in Business Administration has a background in Human Resource Management.



LWEGABA RACHEAL BUSINGE has been appointed as the new HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER. She was previously in administration at RHSP Kampala office and has opted for more challenging work in human resource management. She holds a Masters in Public Administration with a background in human resource too.



MARIA MIREMBE has been appointed as HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER. She has 8 years experience of work with; Mercy Corps, International Financial Empowerment Consultants and ECO Bank. Maria holds a Postgraduate diploma in human resource with a background in development studies.

AT RHSP the mental and physical health of staff is key. We work hard and play hard too. Below is the team that participated and represented RHSP at the recently concluded Kabaka's Birthday Run. Bravooooooo to the team.





FEATURE STORY

Harriet Nanzige from Kyegonza was a gardener before she joined DREAMS project. She struggled to make ends meet until the opportunity to gain various skills came her way in 2016 when she joined DREAMS.

After months of training she graduated and was offered a position as a SINOVIYO Facilitator where she had a chance to teach other girls. She was later selected to take part in Data Entry training after which she was a beneficiary of a start up package of; sweet potato seed, cassava stems, a hoe, tarpauline, 15kgs of beans and 5kgs of maize and a spray jet.

Harriet planted some of the beans and maize from which reaped more that she sold in the local market. Some of these profits she used for buying 2 goats and a pig and also managed to cement her house and pay school fees for her kids. Her appointment as a Data Entrant in DREAMS program in Kasaka village has



further empowered her with a salary which she uses to give a hand to other underprivileged girls in the program and also invest more in her gardening which she has increased to 2 acreage.

Harriet had never taken an HIV test before she joined DREAMS but now it has become a routine because she has learned that responsible living comes hand in hand with knowing your HIV status.

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