ORAL HEALTH TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN NAIROBI EAST DISTRICT INCREASES IDENTIFICATION OF HIV-INFECTED PATIENTS

Abstract

Background
Better knowledge and skills for diagnosis and management of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) related oral lesions by primary healthcare workers (PHWs) may increase recognition of HIV-related oral lesions (HROLs) in Kenya. For this purpose training programs at health facility and community level were evaluated.

Design and methods
A pre-post control-test group design in two administrative divisions of Nairobi East District was used. Clinical competencies of PHWs (n=32 intervention, and n=27 control) at health facility level were assessed 9 months after training, and after 6 months for community health workers, (CHWs) (n=411 intervention and n=404 control) using written questionnaires, clinical data and patient interviews. Effects on referral for HIV testing and actual HIV testing were assessed by comparing laboratory registries pre- and post training.

Results
PHWs in intervention (n= 27; 84%) and control (n= 15; 60%) divisions, and CHWs in intervention (n=330; 80%) and control (189; 47%) divisions, completed all questionnaires. Trained PHWs significantly increased their knowledge of HROLs (p< 0.02), frequency of oral

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examinations, diagnosis of HROLs and referral of patients with HROLs for HIV testing. Trained CHWs significantly gained knowledge about HROLs (p< 0.02) and referred more patients with HROLs to health facilities. Increase in overall HIV testing rates (1.6% pre-, 1.2% post training) and overall percentage of HIV-positive results (13% pre-, 16% post-intervention) was not significant.

**Conclusion**

Training programs significantly increased PHW and CHW knowledge, recognition and management of HROLs but increased neither overall HIV testing rates nor overall percentage of positive tests.