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Acceptance of HIV Testing for Children Ages 18 Months to 13 Years Identified Through Voluntary, Home-Based HIV Counseling and Testing in Western Kenya

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Abstract:

Background Home-based, voluntary counseling and testing (HCT) presents a novel approach to early diagnosis. We sought to describe uptake of pediatric HIV testing, associated factors, and HIV prevalence among children offered HCT in Kenya. Methods The USAID-AMPATH Partnership conducted HCT in western Kenya in 2008. Children 18 months to 13 years were offered HCT if their mother was known to be dead, her living status was unknown, mother was HIV-infected or of unknown HIV status. This retrospective analysis describes the cohort of children encountered and tested. Results HCT was offered to 2,289 children and accepted for 1,294 (57%). Children were more likely to be tested if more information was

available about a suspected or confirmed maternal HIV-infection (for HIV-infected, living mothers OR=3.20, 95% CI: 1.64–6.23), if parents were not in household (OR=1.50, 95% CI: 1.40–1.63), if they were grandchildren of head of household (OR=4.02, 95% CI: 3.06–5.28), or if their father was not in household (OR=1.41, 95% CI: 1.24–1.56). Of the eligible children tested, 60 (4.6%) were HIV-infected. Conclusions HCT provides an opportunity to identify HIV among high-risk children; however, acceptance of HCT for children was limited. Further investigation is needed to identify and overcome barriers to testing uptake.

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