

# Taking Safe Male Circumcision services to a fishing village in East Central Uganda

Martin. Ndifuna<sup>1</sup>, Shadrack.Obura<sup>2</sup>, Charles.Kaluba<sup>2</sup>, Samson.Kironde<sup>1</sup>, Alex. Mugume<sup>1</sup>, Emmanuel. Tibenderana<sup>1</sup>, Francis. Kazibwe<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI)/Strengthening TB and HIV&AIDS Responses in East Central Uganda (STAR-EC), <sup>2</sup>Namayingo District

## Issue

HIV prevalence among fishing communities living and working within the islands of Lake Victoria has been shown to be very high. The Strengthening TB and HIV&AIDS Responses in East Central Uganda (STAR-EC) program records show this to be as high as 17%-20%. Following the 'Know Your Epidemic-Know Your Response' paradigm, STAR-EC has tailored her response towards communities from which new HIV infections are most likely to arise such as the fishing communities. To do this, STAR-EC conducted a fact-finding visit to Sigulu Islands; an archipelago of eleven islands in Lake Victoria which has a male population of 18,800; a high HIV&AIDS burden and high STI prevalence; as well as limited access to HIV&AIDS services including safe male circumcision (SMC). The island communities are amongst the hard-to-reach populations and it takes about 8 hours to travel to these Islands.

## Description

STAR-EC is a five-year district-based initiative funded by USAID, managed by JSI Research & Training Institute Inc., (JSI), covering nine districts of East Central Uganda. It aims at increasing access to, coverage of, and utilization of quality comprehensive HIV&AIDS and TB prevention, care and treatment. STAR-EC added voluntary male medical circumcision services commonly referred to as safe male circumcision (SMC) in Uganda to her comprehensive HIV prevention programs following the WHO recommendations in 2007 and launch of the policy guidelines for circumcision by the Ministry of Health.



Men lining up for registration to receive HCT prior to receiving male circumcision services at a landing site

STAR-EC in partnership with service providers from the mainland and civil society conducted two integrated service delivery visits to the Island communities in which circumcision services were integrated. Tents which served as a service area were pitched. Clients received group education and counseling; HTC; physical examination and screening for STIs; and finally circumcision services for eligible consenting persons.

Following circumcision, the clients were provided with post circumcision instructions and pain killers.



Clients receive SMC services during a camp in a fishing village

During these visits, a total of 442 clients accessed the package of safe male circumcision services. At the location where circumcision services were stationed, 60% (n =2,287) of the clients who received HCT services were males. This illustrates how SMC provided an opportunity for males to access comprehensive HIV&AIDS services. Following the conclusion of the visits, district health workers were supported to conduct follow up and monitoring of the clients who had been served.

## Lessons Learned

Male circumcision services attracted so many men which provided an opportunity to reach them with other HIV&AIDS services such as HCT, cotrimoxazole prophylaxis for all identified HIV positive persons, CD4 testing, ART services and STI screening and treatment.



A client comes out of the tent after being served

## Next steps

STAR-EC will support training of locally based team of service providers to regularly offer SMC services and provide follow up after circumcision camps and outreaches within the islands.