

QuickRes maintains HIV services for key populations under COVID-19 lockdowns in Namibia.

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Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced governments to impose lockdown restrictions on people's movement to curb the spread of the virus. This has resulted in the physical closure of hotspots, impacting the routine delivery of HIV prevention services and linkage to clinical services for key populations (KPs) in Namibia. The already marginalized KPs stand to suffer even further marginalization from society, facing an increasingly fragile economy and accelerating health disparities due to COVID-19.

Methods

To reduce gaps in service delivery during lockdowns, the KP-STAR project, funded by PEPFAR through USAID and implemented by IntraHealth Namibia, adapted QuickRes in August 2020 and rolled it out to 10 priority geographical areas (PGAs). Developed by FHI 360, QuickRes is an online application originally created to ensure continuity in HIV prevention interventions for KPs including linkage to ART, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and follow-up services for viral load (VL) suppression and those who interrupt treatment. QuickRes allows clients to book HIV services online and allows case managers to monitor clients on ART and PrEP, provide phone-based support, track clients, and schedule and plan client refill appointments remotely, minimizing face-to-face interaction.

Results

Between January-June 2021, 37 of 72 clinics mapped into QuickRes were active for KPs to make bookings and risk assessments and for case managers to capture data on HIV testing, PrEP, and ART services across the 10 PGAs.

Staffed by 21 case managers equipped with tablets, we observed 2863 total users; 1083 completed risk assessments and 1328 directly booked appointments.

2502 (72%) arrived at clinics, 1549 (62%) received HIV tests with 242 (15.6%) testing HIV positive; 592 initiated PrEP (45.3%). 160 (66%) enrolled in ART; 52.9% are virally suppressed clients on ART with documented VL done in last 12 months.

Conclusion

KPs can be reached through QuickRes and encouraged to access HIV prevention interventions, treatment, and retention in care, contributing to achieving VL suppression under lockdowns and reaching clients that cannot be reached face-to-face.

Future benefits of QuickRes include extending the online application to the Ministry of Health and Social Services for complete online coordination with health workers and case managers.



Key Populations - Strengthening Technical Assistance and Response for Sustainable HIV Prevention and Treatment (KP-STAR) project, led by IntraHealth Namibia in collaboration with IntraHealth International, Walvis Bay Corridor Group, and key population-led civil society organizations Rights not Rescue Trust, Rights for All Movements and Wings to Transcend Namibia Trust, is funded by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR, through the United States Agency for International Development, USAID. The contents of this poster do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.