

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME TO  
IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS OF YOUNG  
ADULTS REGARDING VCT USE IN  
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

By

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## SUMMARY

Reduction and control of HIV and AIDS in South Africa is needed through the use of VCT. The purpose of the study was to develop an educational programme to improve perceptions of young adults regarding VCT use and thus promote the use of VCT by young adults in Limpopo Province.

Currently there is no clear or available data reflecting the utilisation of VCT services by young adults in Limpopo Province. The hospitals are offering VCT services in the province, and if these services were properly utilised, it was going to be evidenced by the reduction of HIV and AIDS statistics. However, several factors such as accessibility and socio-cultural issues may impact on the use or uptake of VCT. It is therefore important to document the perceptions of young adults and of VCT counselors towards VCT use by young adults.

The research approach was conducted in three phases. **Phase one** included research design and methods (population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, ethical measures and trustworthiness of data). **Phase two** addressed development of an educational programme based on the findings from situational analysis. **Phase three** included programme implementation.

Phase one, research design (qualitative namely exploratory, descriptive and contextual) and methods, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, ethical measures and trustworthiness of data were included.

Findings from the young adults in this study reflect that young adults have mixed feelings about VCT, such as wanting to go for VCT in order to know their HIV status but coupled with fear. Lack of confidentiality, lack of privacy and the perceived death sentence attached to HIV and AIDS were aspects mentioned to be contributory factors to reluctance in using VCT services. Stigma associated with being HIV positive experienced by people who are HIV positive evidenced by signs of abuse and rejection are some of the aggravating factors to reluctance.

Involvement of stakeholders was seen as one of the factors together with good teaching approach which can improve young adults' responses and increase VCT uptake.

VCT counselors' findings in the study showed that the programme for VCT was viewed as beneficial to young adults and all the other members in the community. VCT programme was believed to be affected by the following factors such as lack of resources and poor support to VCT counselors. VCT counselors are the stumbling blocks to the programme because they are afraid to be tested themselves so it is difficult to emphasize the use of programme that they are also not supporting or to preach on something that you not practicing. VCT counselors are also afraid to give positive results to young adults and this further aggravate young adults' responses to the programme negatively. Stakeholders' involvement was believed to be one of the aspects which can increase VCT uptake by young adults.

Programme development was done following an inductive qualitative research design using exploratory, descriptive and contextual approaches. The educational programme to improve young adult's perceptions was developed after data analysis. All elements and relational statements concerning the perceptions and attitudes of young adults and stakeholders were highlighted and a schematic representation to indicate main concepts (Chinn & Kramer 1999: 59-61).

The theoretical framework for programme development was based on Dickoff, James and Wiedenbach (1968:422) who discussed programme development according to six aspects of activity namely agent, recipients, context, terminus, procedure and dynamics ( Dickoff et al 1968: 423; Walker & Avant 1995: 37)

Implementation plays a very important role in ensuring that the programme is appropriately used and effective. As part of implementation of the newly developed programme, workshops were conducted with young adults in order to promote the services in the community.

VCT training for training VCT counselors should include different factors such as VCT counselors' interaction with young adults. This will help in the provision of quality VCT services that are useful and friendly to VCT users including young adults. Aspects to be incorporated in VCT training include:

- Scope of practice R2598 and emphasis be given to issues affecting VCT services
- Acts and Omissions R387, reflecting the importance of confidentiality and privacy according to the Acts
- SANC policy on HIV/AIDS and SANC commitments in scaling down HIV and AIDS pandemic
- Batho Pele principles and its relevance in VCT services

This would help in reminding the VCT counselors as well as nurses of their duties and responsibilities in VCT services as they interact with young adults.

VCT counselors should always ensure that their practice is based within the legal framework which spells out how health care and VCT should be offered. Young adults should always be taken as partners in VCT services and their perceptions be addressed. The following legal issues such as patients' right charter, Batho Pele principles, scope of practice, acts and omissions need to be respected and implemented accordingly.