



CHAO STUDY RESULT DISSEMINATION MEETING REPORT

EVENT HELD AT ELSA HOTEL MERU ON 5TH DECEMBER, 2023

- The event was organised to disseminate the results of Comorbidities in HIV/AIDS Outpatients (CHAO) study held jointly by DREAM Kenya Trust, Department of Health Meru County and selected Faith Based facilities in the county.
- 25 facilities were involved in the study
- The period of the study has been approximately one and half years and 1051 patients were enrolled in the study.

Delegates invited

- 100 delegates were invited for the one day result dissemination meeting distributed as follows;
 - i. County Health Management Team (CHMT) members, Department of Health, County Government of Health.
 - ii. HIV Program Coordinators from 11 sub counties in Meru County
 - iii. 2 staff from each of the 25 facilities selected and participated in the study.
 - iv. 1 Person Living with HIV (PLHIV) per each facility which participated in the study
 - v. DREAM Kenya Staff from Eastern sites.
 - vi. Representative from National Syndemic Disease Control Council (NSDCC) –Did not participate due to official commitments.

Meeting organization

The meeting was organized by DREAM Kenya Trust Eastern Coordinator in collaboration with County AIDS & STI Coordinator (CASCO) and authorised by Director of Health Services, County Government of Meru.

The presentations were done by:

- a. Prof. Stefano Orlando (University of Rome, Tor Vergata)
- b. Benjamin Welu (DREAM Kenya Trust)
- c. Harrison Ndoi (DREAM Kenya Trust)
- d. Doreen Kendi (MOH)

Programmers

- Irene Karea (DREAM Program)
- Regina Kawira (DREAM Program)

- Supported by Mercy Karimi, Joseph Mwiti, Elosy Kinya, LilyAnn Njiru (All from DREAM Kenya Trust)
- Technical support by Edward Kariithi and Humphrey Meeta –DREAM Kenya Trust.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

8:00-9:30AM- Arrival and registration of members invited

9:30AM – The meeting began by a word of prayer from Humphrey (HRIO-Aina Clinic).

Thereafter Irene welcomed all members present. She also introduced them all by recognizing each sub county represented whereby we had members from; Tigania central, Tigania West, Tigania East, Igembe central, Igembe North, Igembe South, Buuri East, Buuri West, Imenti North, Imenti South and Imenti Central.

Irene also recognized the presents of the guests of the day Prof. Stefano (the principal investigator of the study) and members of CHMT led by Mr. Joseph Murungi the CASCO-Meru county.

Later she welcomed Benjamin to give the overview of the days program.

9:40AM- Benjamin took over. He explained the purpose of the event was for dissemination of the results for the CHAO study that was carried out previously in the facilities in Meru county.

He also informed members on the following;

*There was another presentation to be done along on a research that was done very successfully in Meru county on PMTCT(birth testing for HIV Exposed Infants).

*Members would be reimbursed on their transport at the end of the day.

*All members were welcome to challenge the study, critique and give recommendations and remarks.

*There will be short interviews during breaks.

He then welcomed Mr. Murungi the CASCO to officially open the meeting and also give his remarks.

9:55AM- The CASCO started by recognizing the presence of all CHMT members including Dr. Isoe the county pharmacist. He passed the apologies for Dr. Thurania –The County Director of Health who was supposed to open the meeting and said that he was aware there was Chao study results dissemination meeting in progress. During his remarks he mentioned about the Triple elimination HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis C among the pregnant women as an important initiative embraced by Meru county. He mentioned that the studies carried out are very important and that people should give their views on the them.

CASCO acknowledged that Preliminary CHAO study results were presented alongside two other presentations from Meru county in the Joint Infectious Disease and HIV International conference held at Naivasha in October 2023.

Finally Benjamin acknowledged CASCO and the CHMT team for the support they have given in the CHAO study process.

10:00AM-Harrison (Clinical officer-Aina Clinic)-was welcomed by the days moderator Madam Irene to give the study overview-Presentation part 1.

He started by introducing the study CHAO which meant Comorbidities in HIV/AIDS Patients in Outpatient. It was carried out in Meru County by the UNIVERSITY OF ROMA TOR VERGATA, COMMUNITY OF SANT'EGIDIO DREAM PROGRAM IN COLLABORATION WITH COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF MERU DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

The study was funded by ITALIAN COOPERATION AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT.

The authors were recognized and also members of the department of Health-Meru county government involved in the study were acknowledged.

He therefore went into **the introduction of the study.**

It was carried out among HIV positive adult patients attending CCC in Meru county health facilities.

In Kenya HIV about 1.4 million people are living with HIV and in Meru county the prevalence was at 3.7% (UNAIDS,2023).

The CHAO study focused on comorbidities in HIV/AIDS outpatient patients in Meru County. The purpose was to understand prevalence of comorbidities and increase knowledge on comorbidities and major risk factors in patients living with HIV/AIDS in the county.

The study involved 1051 HIV positive patients in 25 CCC clinics in Meru county.

The research question was supposed to answer;

*Prevalence of comorbidities in HIV like Hypertension, Diabetes, Hepatitis, Syphilis, Obesity, Dyslipidemia, Cardiovascular diseases and Kidney diseases.

*Short Impact Of comorbidities among the newly enrolled HIV patients in CCC by screening for the diseases on enrolment and continue monitoring for 2years, this will be answered by the COHORT study that is ongoing.

The Research Methodology; The study employed cross sectional design to evaluate the patients.

Participating facilities; the selection was done randomly based on the population (number of HIV positive patients enrolled and who are on care) per clinic.

Facilities selected were both FBO and MOH. Map of Meru County was then projected showing the participating clinics and sampled patients for each highlighted.

Recruitment and Screening for patients was done during 'HEALTH DAYS' which are routine clinic days when patients have appointments. This was considered for every clinic involved in the study. Health education was done then consent administered to those willing then interviewed and tests carried out. All the tests were done in DREAM Program supported labs.

After the presentation room was given for comments and questions.

ITALIAN COOPERATION

Before break Representative of Italian cooperation (Mauro) the donor who funded the study made his speech opening speech connected virtually to the conference.

He acknowledged the enormous contribution the study will make to knowledge of local prevalence of comorbidities among HIV patients in Meru County. He appreciated the collaboration with local stakeholders (MOH) which will ensure ownership of the results for decision-making and integration of services.

Benjamin thanked Mauro and appreciated the Italian cooperation for the help and funding offered.

10:30AM-11:00AM –TEA BREAK whereby there was tea and snacks for all, Evaline (SCASCO-Tigania West) prayed for the tea.

11:00AM- Members were back and Benjamin welcomed Prof Stefano for the presentation of results.

He started by introducing himself whereby he said he is a Professor of public health in the University of Tor Vergata.

He said the purpose of the event was not only dissemination of results but also discussion of the statistics therefore members needed to give their feedback.

He presented a descriptive analysis of the data as below;

NUMBER INVOLVED IN STUDY

- Women-75% (791)
- Men-25% (260)
- ART REGIMEN
- 1st line-96%(1003)
- 2nd line-4.3%(45)
- Unknown-3

GFR RATES

- NORMAL-28%(287)
- MILD-39% (407)
- MODERATE-32%(338)
- SEVERE-1.0%(10)
- UNKNOWN-9

COMORBIDITIES

- Only HIV-44.6% with no any comorbidities.
- Atleast 1 comorbidity-36.9%

- More than 1 comorbidity-18.5%

Among those with comorbidities;

- 33.5% has NCDs
- 14.9% had communicable diseases, maternal and neonatal and nutrition
- 6.9% had multiple category

The proportions were as follows in percentage;

- Dyslipidemia-21.2% ,Hypertension-20.2%, Malnutrition 15.9%, Obesity-9.2%,Syphilis-5.2%,
- Hepatitis B-2.2%, Diabetes-1.8%,TB-0.9%,Hepatitis C-0.3%.

The data presented also shown in age related prevalence that the younger population was more affected. Also hypertension increased with advanced age and malnutrition cases decreased with decreased age.

Prof Stefano also presented Geospatial analysis of the data with NCDs per the clinic included in the study in a map presentation.

12:00Noon- Benjamin took over to present implications and recommendations based on the study findings.

He mentioned HIV prevalence in Meru county was at 2.4% and according to the study syphilis prevalence in Meru is 5.2% higher than HIV prevalence.

Implications;

Demand for:

- Increased and routine screening of patients for both communicable and non communicable diseases.
- Capacity building of health care providers and community health promoters on NCDs and CDs.
- Policy review and implementation of guidelines on NCDs.
- Need for continuous research and innovative strategies towards prevention and treatment of comorbidities in HIV.

Benjamin also presented general and specific measures for the NCDs.

After the session, he welcomed remarks from all attendees whereby 2 online attendees Dr. Fausto and Dr. Mauro gave their remarks.

Other contributions from the members included;

- Concerns about Hepatitis B especially that there high numbers of pregnant mothers testing positive. Therefore the county pharmacist was requested to act on that.

-Issue of commodity in HIV management since there was data in general population therefore recommendations for more studies to find out more on the comorbidities in the general population not only in HIV.

-Concern about HEP B positivity testing yet they are patients using ART which is yet used to treat hepatitis b. Therefore the need for more study to find out the relationship between HIV and Hepatitis.

-The CHAO study was appreciated and the impact on the triple threat especially on the adolescents in teenage pregnancies.

-There was also recommendations for Cryptococcus investigations to be considered in future studies. It was noted that there was a challenge in CD4 uptake, data shown that the uptake was very low. Usually this determines uptake of Serum CRAG based on CD4 count.

12:30pm-A presentation on the results on Infant HIV testing at birth in MeTRH done by Doreen (SCASCO-BUURI)

- Research was carried out between April 2015 and April-2020.
- Maternal HIV transmission;In utero-5-10%, labour and delivery-10-20%, postnatally-8.3%
- In Meru mother to child transmissions are at 10.8%
- The Initiative of the study was to close the EID testing gap.
- One of the objective and aim was to explore acceptability .
- She also presented the methodology used for the study and findings.-Training on DBs collection, referral and documentation

-1162 infants born in the study period

-Birth testing done at 0-3days, TAT-3DAYS

-19 infants turned positive

-16 infants initiated on ART within 7days

-3 infants loss to follow up due to poor locator details

-14 infants on ART followed atleast 2years

-13 infants virally suppressed

-1 infant died of severe pneumonia

The presentation ended at 1.00pm when members took lunch break.

After Lunch 2:00pm-3:30pm plenary session-questions and answers for the day presentations.

Also members of the CHMT were welcomed to give their remarks and also one to give the closing remarks.

Monica-SCASCO (Imenti North) thanked the DREAM team for the research and recommended the MOH to integrate all that in their clinics. Meru County was very true and finally urged everyone especially those working in the CCC to ensure they screen all patients for NCDs.

Dr.Lilian Kaloki-The head NCDs Meru County thanked the Dream Program for having an evidence based report that a number of people are living with comorbidities.She also recommended that the study should be extended of cervical cancer screening among women living with HIV/AIDs.Also she urged if all clinic could integrate their services.

Finally Dr. Janice Mukami-Head of special programs was welcomed to give her closing remarks on behalf of Director of Health Services and close the event officially.

The meeting ended with a word of prayer from one of the members at 3:30pm and all left at their pleasure after sharing tea.

Rapporteurs: LilyAnn Njiru AND Elosy Kinya.

Report reviewed and approved by Benjamin Welu