

Findings

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Best Practices
Infobrief



Findings reports on ongoing operational, economic and sector work carried out by the World Bank and its member governments in the Africa Region. It is published periodically by the Africa Technical Department on behalf of the Region.

Best Practice in AIDS Prevention and Mitigation

Rapid Assessment of Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevalence: An assessment tool used in nine country studies (Burkina Faso, Chad, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe) and planned in four more (Benin, The Gambia, Togo and Nigeria).

Objectives: To gather information on special population groups -- pregnant women, military men, truck drivers, sex workers -- through testing for common STDs and making inquiries regarding sexual practices and attitudes using a rapid assessment methodology.

Impact on the ground: The studies (i) are the first ever reliable source of STD prevalence data in these countries, (ii) raise awareness of policy-makers as to the magnitude of common STDs and unsafe sexual behavior among certain population groups, (iii) validate STD treatment guidelines, (iv) increase capacity in clinical and epidemiological skills, and (v) help to effectively treat study participants for common STDs.

Lessons Learned:

- **Prevalence levels are often high.** Rates for a STD reach as high as 43 percent among pregnant women, 9 percent among military men and 13 percent among truck drivers. It is very common for sex workers to have several infections simultaneously.
- **Disbelief in infection and risk status.** Most study participants do not know they are infected and do not believe that they are at risk of acquiring an STD. Thus, condom use is rare among both men and women and sex with multiple partners is common among men.

- **Simple design but complex logistics.** These studies, although simple and rapid in design compared to community-based household surveys, are still a challenge to perform in the low resource setting of most African countries. Ensuring high quality standards for laboratory testing and adequate supplies of drugs, and mobilizing truck drivers and sex workers requires a high degree of planning and resourcefulness.
- **Need to expand assessment.** Two additional areas need to be included: (i) an assessment of the quality of existing STD clinical care in public and private settings; and (ii) an assessment of the health seeking behavior of persons with STD symptoms.

For more information on the STD rapid assessment study, contact Wendy Roseberry, AFTHR. World Bank Staff: more examples of **Best Practice** can be found on the **AIDS Home Page**. To access this page, click on Netscape. Under "location" type "http://afr" to get to the Africa Region Home Page. Then click on Best Practice and select AIDS.