Linking Paediatric, Adolescent and Adult Patients to Care through the Implementation of Clinic Navigators (CNs) in High Volume Facilities

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Introduction
Background

- Linkage to care refers to the process of initiating HIV-related medical, psychological and social services for newly diagnosed HIV-positive persons

- Over 50% of newly diagnosed persons do not receive HIV-related care within 6 months of diagnosis (1)

- Failures in linkage are associated with lower levels of viral suppression, and greater likelihood of viral resistance (2)


Background

  - >6.3 million people living with HIV
  - Estimated 200,000 die of HIV each year
  - 60% of HIV infected clients are not on treatment
  - Loss to follow-up
  - Death due to comorbid disease
Intervention: Implementation of Clinic Navigators

- MatCH employed CNs to strengthen the 90-90-90 strategy:
  - Conduct health education talks and link patients to services within the facility
  - Link adults & paeds to HTS
  - Link pregnant and breastfeeding women to HTS

1st 90

- Identify and triage HIV positive children <5 years not initiated on ART prior to the change in national HIV/AIDS guidelines
- Link eligible patients for ART initiation

2nd 90

- Assisting with Tier.net file tracing and data flow
- Trace patients with high VL and link to care
- Trace patients who are LTFU

3rd 90
Methodology
Methodology

38 Clinic Navigators

- Grade 12; Basic Related Health Care Certificates & Administrative skills
- Placed in 14x high volume health facilities

- Cost $10,090 each per year
- Facility-based
- Issued with cell phones and airtime to trace patients
- Issued with electronic tablets to facilitate reporting process
Reporting Tools Used by Clinic Navigators

Reporting Tool on Electronic Tablets

- Patient Service Areas
  - Patient Tracing
  - Patient Support
  - Patient linkage to Tier.net
- ART initiation
- High VL
- PCR results
- TB results
- CD4 results
Results
Overall Results: July 2016 – May 2017

Patient Service Areas

- ART Initiation Linked to Tier.net: 8787
- Patient Support: 49638
- Patient Tracing: 11103

Number of Patients
1. Patient Service Area: Patient Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities patients were linked to</th>
<th>Number of patients linked to services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults linked to HCT</td>
<td>11744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paeds linked to HCT</td>
<td>1534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant/BF women linked to HCT</td>
<td>5132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paeds linked to PCR</td>
<td>2172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients linked to CD4 count</td>
<td>5702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible clients linked to ART initiation</td>
<td>7333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients linked to TB screening</td>
<td>3923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with TB contact linked to screening</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients linked to Wellness</td>
<td>4834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients provided Health Education</td>
<td>7131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Patient Service Area: Patient Tracing (Overall)

- **ART initiation (Total n= 3349)**
  - Responded to telephonic call: 1434
  - Returned to the clinic: 966

- **High VL (Total n= 6180)**
  - Responded to telephonic call: 5361
  - Returned to the clinic: 4024

- **LTFU (Total n= 11207)**
  - Responded to telephonic call: 3015
  - Returned to the clinic: 344

- **New HIV positive - CD4 results (Total n= 493)**
  - Responded to telephonic call: 368
  - Returned to the clinic: 344

- **PCR results (Total n= 914)**
  - Responded to telephonic call: 756
  - Returned to the clinic: 712

- **TB results (Total n= 401)**
  - Responded to telephonic call: 401
  - Returned to the clinic: 354
2.1. Patient Tracing: ART Initiation

![Bar chart showing the number of patients by age groups. The chart indicates the number of patients who answered telephonic calls and those who returned to the clinic for ART initiation.](image)
2.2. Patient Tracing: High Viral Load

![Graph showing number of patients contacted telephonically, answered telephonic call, and returned to clinic for management of high VL by age category.]

- **0 - 59 months**: 200 contacted telephonically, 174 answered telephonic call, 176 returned to clinic.
- **5 - 9 years**: 309 contacted, 269 answered, 269 returned.
- **10 - 14 years**: 579 contacted, 526 answered, 523 returned.
- **15 - 19 years**: 619 contacted, 539 answered, 536 returned.
- **≥ 20 years**: 4473 contacted, 3851 answered, 3806 returned.

Legend:
- Blue: Contacted telephonically
- Gray: Answered telephonic call
- Red: Returned to clinic for management of high VL
2.3. Patient Tracing: TB results

The diagram shows the number of patients contacted telephonically, answered telephonic call, and returned to clinic for TB results in different age categories. The age categories are:

- **0 - 59 months**: 32, 21, 18
- **5 - 9 years**: 18, 11, 8
- **10 - 14 years**: 18, 13, 12
- **15 - 19 years**: 29, 15, 15
- **≥ 20 years**: 573, 341, 301

The diagram uses different colors to represent each action:
- Blue for contacted telephonically
- Gray for answered telephonic call
- Red for returned to clinic for TB results
2.4. Patient Tracing: Lost to follow up

![Graph showing patient tracing by age categories and reasons for lost to follow up.](image)

- Contacted telephonically
- Answered telephonic call
- Returned to clinic for continued evaluation and continued management
3. Patient Service Area: ART Initiation Linked to Tier.net

Percentage per Age-Group

- 94% (0 - 59 months)
- 4% (5 - 9 years)
- 1% (10 - 19 years)
- 1% (> 20 years)
Discussion
Key Focus Areas

- The average reach was a minimum of 8 clients per day

- Highest patient numbers (n= 49 638) were noted with the patient support component of the PSA
  - Demonstrated need for on-site linkage to care for patients accessing health facilities

- Patients (adult men) with positive TB results are delaying treatment initiation
  - 401 patients were traced for TB result
  - 88% of patients returned for TB results.
  - The 12% (n= 47) patients that did not return were all male, of which, 6 had demised.
Key Focus Areas

- Only 30% of patients who were eligible for ART initiation returned to the facility following telephonic tracing
  - Factors resulting in delayed return of patients to health facilities for ART initiation need to be further investigated especially in the adult age group i.e. ≥ 20 years

- Loss to follow-up remains a challenge especially in adult age group i.e. ≥ 20 years
  - Need for collaborative efforts between facilities and communities to trace and retain patients in care
  - Role of unique patient identifier
Conclusion
Conclusion

- Urgency to link and retain HIV-infected people in care due to increasing priorities in HIV treatment and prevention initiatives.
Conclusion

- CNs play an integral role in the health system by:
  - Facilitating access to care for all patients
  - Breaking literacy barriers
  - Improve provider-patient communications
  - Retain patients in care
Acknowledgements

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