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CASE STUDY

Context

- Clinic X is located in District W of Country Z
- HIV prevalence of 32% in general population
- PMTCT and HIV Care and Treatment Services are integrated at Clinic X

Challenges Identified Through Recent Review

- Low uptake of PMTCT among women at every step of cascade
- Almost 70% loss to follow up of HIV-exposed infants after one year
- High rates of vertical HIV transmission in infants retained in program

Findings from Related Focus Groups

- Male involvement in PMTCT is a major gap in Clinic X's PMTCT program
- Men's participation in HIV counseling and testing and PMTCT is almost non-existent
- Yet, men are the chief decision makers when it comes to health
- Women are supposed to seek husband's permission for HIV testing
- Women are reluctant to disclose HIV status because of fear of abandonment

“We all know when you get pregnant as an HIV-positive woman, you get sick and become weak, so he is scared that people will know that you are positive, and know that he is also positive, so he wants to stay as far away as possible from you. He is running away from the name and stigma (focus group participant)*

Reasons for Lack of Male Involvement in PMTCT at Clinic X

- Cultural norms
- Men's lack of understanding of health issues
- Environment of clinics
- Clinic staff attitudes

Some Quotes from Men

- ***“We as men we cannot sit and talk about AIDS, we were brought up to be strong; sickness is weakness. It’s cultural and it’s where we come from as men.”****
- ***“We are scared to go to the clinic, because we are not used to it. Most of the time you find that women are the ones who go to the clinics.”****
- ***“I am afraid to go and test because it’s like a death penalty ... the day I convince myself to go, it would be a do or die scenario, but for now I don’t have the courage.”****

Men That Come to the Clinic Don't Return

“We love to go and test, but at the clinic they don’t treat us well, sometimes when you go and test, they would say ‘Are you busy charming? How many women did you sleep with last week?’”*

The Task

- Clinic X needs to increase male involvement in PMTCT to reduce vertical HIV transmission
- What strategies would you recommend for the clinic to increase male involvement in their PMTCT and HIV Care and Treatment program?
- What would be the top two priority interventions for this context? Why?

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