

Abstract

BACKGROUND:

Controlling sexually transmitted diseases requires that partners of patients with a sexually transmitted disease be notified and treated. However, many countries in the developing world lack the infrastructure and resources for effective partner referral.

GOAL OF THIS STUDY:

To provide information on rates of partner referral in primary-level health centers in Kenya, to identify characteristics of patients with sexually transmitted diseases who inform their partners about the need for treatment, and to evaluate the impact of a brief counseling intervention on rates of partner notification.

STUDY DESIGN:

Two-hundred-fifty-four patients presenting for treatment of a sexually transmitted disease were given 5 to 10 minutes of additional counseling on the importance of referring partners for sexually transmitted disease treatment. All patients who returned for follow-up 1 week later were interviewed to determine whether they had notified their sex partners.

RESULTS:

Sixty-eight percent of patients who returned for follow-up reported they had referred their partners for treatment of a sexually transmitted disease. The highest rates of partner notification occurred among women attending maternal child health/family planning clinics and married men and women attending general outpatient clinics.

CONCLUSION:

Strengthening and directing counseling toward women in maternal child health/family planning clinics and married men and women in general clinics may be an effective and inexpensive way to increase partner notification in the developing world.