

# **Provider characteristics among staff providing care to sexually transmitted infection self-medicating patients in retail pharmacies in Kibera slum, Nairobi, Kenya**

## **Abstract:**

To evaluate the characteristics of providers in management of STI self-medicating patients in retail pharmacies within the largest informal settlement in Kenya. **METHODS:** We collected sociodemographic, training, and work history attributes among pharmacy staff from a convenience sample of 50 retail pharmacies in Kibera slum using a self-administered questionnaire. We gathered the required data in 8 weeks, collecting completed self-administered questionnaires within 7 to 14 days after distribution. Two data collectors subsequently presented at these pharmacies as mystery patients seeking care for symptoms of genital ulcer disease and gonorrhea and completed a structured observation form within 10 minutes of leaving the pharmacy. **RESULTS:** Approximately half the respondents were men aged less than 28 years. Over 90% had 12 years of formal education and an additional 3 years of medical professional training. Two thirds (66%) had been trained in Government institutions. About 65% reported that patients presented without prescriptions, and 45% noted that patients requested specific medicines but were open to advice. One-third (36%) of the patients used the pharmacy as their first point of care. Using mystery patients to evaluate syndromic management of gonorrhea and genital ulcer disease, only 10% offered appropriate treatment per the Kenya Ministry of Health STI syndromic management guidelines. **CONCLUSION:** Although the majority of the pharmacy staff in this informal settlement have some medical training and some experience, a very low proportion offered adequate treatment for 2 common STIs.