

Integrating Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) intervention project for Female Sex Workers (FSW) into primary level of care in Ghana: Assessing the impact a decade after project implementation.

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Introduction

Ghana benefited from the Canadian International Development Agency funded STI project for FSW involving 9 West African countries between 1996 and 2006. The project was geared towards ensuring strong community mobilization coupled with the integration of STI prevention, treatment, care and support into the primary level of care with the view of promoting higher coverage, local ownership and ensuring sustainability. We determine the impact of the intervention a decade after the end of the project.

Methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study assessed all the 21 former project clinics from 10 administrative regions in Ghana from September 20th to October 20th, 2014. Data was collected through site visitation, key informants interviews using structured questionnaire, survey of clinical staff and documentary review. Areas assessed were ownership, coverage, clinical and community activities and patronage.

Results

19 out of the 21 clinics were found to be operational and fully part of the Ghana Health Services health delivery system. 12 out of the 19 have been upgraded into chronic care clinics for the provision of services to patients reporting with conditions such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, diabetes, hypertension and asthma. Available records indicated that FSW still patronized 14 of these clinics. Overall, there has been marginal increase in the FSW attendance compared with statistics during the time of the project.

Conclusion

The integration of the STI intervention project into the primary level of care in the Ghana Health Services is a success. FSW like other clients who patronize health facilities deserve equal dignity, respect and quality care.

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