

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Adolescents' views of and preferences for sexual and reproductive health services in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda

Ann E. Biddlecom^{1*}, Alister Munthali², Susheela Singh¹ and Vanessa Woog³

Guttmacher Institute, New York, NY, United States¹; Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi, Zomba, Malawi²; Consultant, New York, NY, United States³

*For Correspondence: E-mail: abiddlecom@guttmacher.org and Phone: 212-248-1111

Abstract

Adolescents' views of and preferences for sexual and reproductive health services highlight promising directions and persistent challenges in preventing pregnancy and HIV and treating sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) in this population. Results from nationally-representative surveys of 12-19 year-olds in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda in 2004 show that contraceptive and STI services and HIV testing are still under-utilized. A substantial proportion of sexually-active adolescents do not know of any source to obtain contraception or get STI treatment, and social-psychological reasons (e.g., embarrassment or fear) and financial cost remain common barriers to getting services. Adolescents' preferences are overwhelmingly for public clinics, with strongly positive perceptions of confidentiality, accessibility and cost. Some gender and country differences exist, yet overall females and males' views are similar. Results highlight the need to inform youth about sources, increase availability of government health facilities and improve youth's access to them, especially by reducing social barriers.

Keywords: Africa, Adolescent, Health Services

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