

**Factors Associated with Uptake of Voluntary Counselling and Human
Immunodeficiency Testing among Pregnant Women Attending Antenatal
Clinic at Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya**

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ABSTRACT

Globally, HIV testing and counselling is recognized as a priority in national HIV programmes because it is the entry point to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment and support interventions. In developing countries, MTCT accounts for the majority of HIV infections in children. However, tremendous medical and public health achievements have been made in the PMTCT of HIV. Voluntary counselling and testing in PMTCT has an important role to play in Kenya's response to the HIV epidemic among women of childbearing age. The main objective of this study was to determine the user rate of VCT and factors associated with its utilization among pregnant women attending antenatal clinic at Kenyatta National Hospital. A cross-sectional study design was used in which data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire in combination with face-to-face interviews. Using the systematic random sampling, 276 pregnant mothers aged 15 years and above, attending the antenatal clinic at the Kenyatta National Hospital were sampled. The VCT uptake among pregnant women attending antenatal clinic was 92.8%. Factors that were significantly associated with VCT utilization among pregnant women included level of education (Tertiary $P = 0.007$, Odds ratio (OR) 10.13, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.56- 82.25: Reference category is Primary level), knowledge on mode of transmission ($P = 0.001$, Odds ratio (OR) 6.35, 95% confidence interval (CI) 2.02- 19.69), knowledge on benefits of pregnant women taking up VCT service in PMTCT ($P = 0.007$, Odds ratio (OR) 4.9, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.5-15.7), knowledge on benefits of counseling ($P = 0.021$, Odds ratio (OR) 5.08, 95% confidence interval (CI) 1.47-17.56), knowledge on issues talked about with the counselor ($P = 0.001$, Odds ratio (OR) 5.65, 95% confidence interval (CI) 2.12-15.06), general attitude of the community ($P = 0.016$, Odds ratio (OR) 4.03, 95% confidence interval (CI) (1.32- 12.29). The study suggests a high (92.8%) uptake of VCT among the pregnant women attending

antenatal clinic at KNH and pregnant women with higher education were more likely to uptake VCT services. Knowledge on HIV and VCT service in PMTCT was the key factor associated with VCT utilization. There is need to strengthen education on VCT in PMTCT of HIV for all pregnant mothers and especially those that decline HIV testing.