

GPHL QUARTERLY

Volume 3. No. 2/ April 1 - June 30, 2020

HIV Clinic Data April - June 2020

Patient Re-attendances: **192**
New Patients Enrolled on Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART): **05**
Mother/Baby Pair Re-attendance: **77**
New Mother/Baby Pairs Enrolled: **01**
Viral Load Samples Done: **52**
Baseline CD4 Done: **04**
Patients who received Social Support: **01**

Major Challenges: Reduced number of clinics and staff, lack of transport, reduced adherence, deaths, missed appointments, lack of masks

Club Updates

Angel Club (Pediatric HIV Clients) and **Wakanda Club** (Adolescent HIV Clients) one on one sessions: **153**

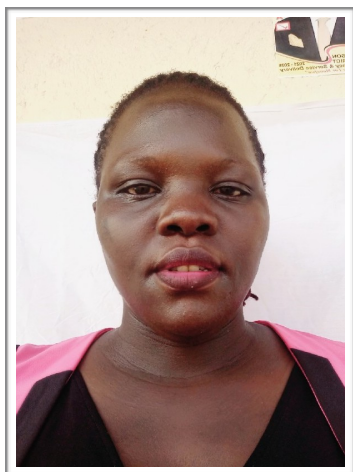
Normal gatherings were on hold due to Covid19 restrictions so individual visits were carried out to continue encouraging and supporting these vulnerable youth during challenging times.

Battling the Twin Pandemics of HIV and Covid 19

Uganda has been battling the HIV pandemic for over thirty years. The strides that have been made by the Ministry of Health and countless implementing partners have led to widely available forms of treatment and a significant reduction in stigma related to the virus. The year 2020 marks an era of a new pandemic which has proven to debilitate the entire world in a matter of months. The second quarter began in the middle of a nationwide lock down, where the challenges of stay at home orders, transportation bans, and lost income further hindered progress in HIV treatment in Uganda. Sarah Nadunga, the Focal Person for the Bugobero Health Center HIV Clinic explains that the biggest challenges during the three month lock down were poor adherence, lack of transportation for clients and health workers, high work load for health workers, and a shortage of face masks which were mandated by the government but in short supply or too expensive for clients to afford. Most clients did not turn up for their medicines because they weren't able to reach the health center. Furthermore, some had a fear that they would be exposed to Covid 19 because Bugobero Health Center was operating an isolation center in one of the wards. Adherence levels significantly reduced and the number of non suppressed clients increased due to failure to pick up the drug refills. Sarah explained that some clients who were self employed were not able

to sustain their families, hence poor nutrition leading to non suppression. Four of the HIV Clinic clients passed away during the lockdown. As the worldwide wave of Covid 19 continues leaving destruction





Clinic Team Spotlight

Nadunga Sarah is a Clinical Officer stationed at Bugobero Health Center IV. She serves as the ART (Antiretroviral Therapy) Clinic Focal Person and supervises the Monday and Friday HIV Clinic services. Sarah is from Bugoma Village in Mbale District. She attended *Jinja School of Nursing* and received a Certificate in Enrolled Nursing. She then went on for further studies at the *Kampala School of Health Sciences* where she received her Diploma in Clinical Medicine. Sarah is officially married and has four children, three girls and one boy. She enjoys supervising the HIV clinic and explains that she loves seeing clients faithfully attending their appointments and those who once had a high viral load (non suppressed) achieve a low viral load level (suppressed). She also loves seeing the pediatric HIV clinic (Wakanda and Angel Club) clients grow and become peer educators. GPHL is thankful to have committed health workers like Sarah on our team!

in its wake, we are yet to see the full effects of the twin pandemics that will most likely be around for the foreseeable future. GPHL continues to be committed to serving our clients in the midst of all the challenges and uncertainties.

Malnutrition: The Hidden Effects of Staying Home

Malnutrition has long been an epidemic of its own in Manafwa District. Over the years, various non profit organizations have made great efforts in partnering with the government of Uganda to address the treatment of malnutrition as well as educate mothers on recommended feeding and care practices for their little ones. Bugobero Health Center IV is the main hub for treatment of malnutrition in Manafwa District. Operated and supervised by government health workers, the bi-weekly Nutrition Clinic at Bugobero has served over 600 patients since 2018 with treatment and support in accordance with Ministry of Health guidelines. The patients receive attention at a number of different stations including a health education talk, Vitals and Height/Weight station, Laboratory Station, Examination by a Clinical Officer or Doctor, Medicine and Feeds Station, and one on one counseling and social support if determined necessary.

Both children and adults are susceptible to malnutrition, with HIV clients being the most vulnerable to nutritional challenges. This quarter, Covid 19 restrictions led to a three month suspension of nutrition clinics. As a result, Bugobero HCIV began to receive patients with very severe cases

of malnutrition leading to a need for referral for inpatient care to Mbale Regional Referral Hospital. However, due to movement restrictions, patients were also not able to access services there. The Nutrition Clinic is scheduled to resume again in July 2020 to help meet the needs of those who have been quarantined at home and unable to access the vital nutritional services they needed.



Pictured above: a health worker checks a child's feet for edema, a sign of Severe Acute Malnutrition.