Managing Media Relations in Uganda

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Safe Male Circumcision Programme

Ministry of Health

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Background

- Popn → 33.4m
- HIV Prevalence 7.3% among the 15-49 (UAIS, 2012)
- Two large traditional circumcising communities
- 2007 → 3 Studies, RSA, Kenya and Uganda
- Implementation began in 2010
- 80% SMC target → 4.2m by 2015
- Over 200,000 adolescents and adults males
Male Circumcision by Region

Percent of men age 15-49 who are circumcised

Uganda 26%

Kampala 35%

Mid Western 30%

Mid 26%

Central 1 29%

Central 2 26%

Mid Eastern 53%

North East 7%

West Nile 28%

South Western 10%

East Central 42%
Engaging Media on SMC

• Approaches
  – Seminars to radio, TV and print media
  – Drafted articles and features about relationship between SMC & HIV
  – Prepared brochures and fact sheets about SMC & HIV for journalists
  – Organized radio and TV talk shows with health experts & leaders using printed talking points
  – Launched National SMC Policy with press---2010
Training Journalists to Report Accurately on SMC

• Database of trained journalists to disseminate fact sheets & IEC materials about the SMC demand creation campaign

• In-house orientation sessions with more than 400 radio, TV, and print journalists nationally
Dealing with Negative Press

• March, 2012: Boyle & Hill assertion that SMC does NOT reduce HIV published in Uganda

• MOH response:
  – Prepared fact sheet on research findings
  – Conducted briefing for media representatives/health workers by researchers involved in RCTs in Uganda
  – Release press release and fact sheet through network of trained journalists
Steps for Managing Media Relations

• Prevent negative press by orienting and keeping journalists informed from the beginning

• Prepare outlines for talk shows and fact sheets for journalists to prevent incorrect information

• When addressing negative press:
  – Prepare speaking points/fact sheets for experts
  – Meet with press to answer questions/correct misconceptions
  – Prepare and distribute press release
I am proud I have a circumcised husband because we have less chances of getting HIV.

Stand Proud. Get Circumcised.
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