

Extended Abstract:

Do Migrant Street Children Use Reproductive Health Services in Uganda?

Francis Mulekya Bwambale, MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY, CAPHRI / IOM/ MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

John Mushomi Atwebembeire, Makerere University

Paul Bukuluki, Makerere University

Hubertus Van den Borne, MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY, CAPHRI

World over, reproductive health remains a significant public health issue of our time. Little or no data exist on health issues for children on the move. The situation of uptake of RH services is even worse in Sub-Saharan Africa as no study has been done to understand the predictors of RH uptake among street children. While past studies have demonstrated rural/urban health disparities, an increasingly important population resulting from urban growth in Uganda is rural urban migration for street children who are most at risk in all fronts. Research with has tended to concentrate on sexual health rather than wider health issues and has failed to differentiate between street children and non -street children and later alone migrant and non-migrant populations. Little is known about the general health and background of street children in Uganda the group likely to have the greatest health needs. While impact of migration on health is well acknowledged, few studies have interrogated the relationship between rural-urban migration and sexual and reproductive health services. This paper investigates the relationship between uptake of reproductive health services and migration status of street children in Uganda. We conducted a survey among 513 street children in three divisions of Kampala City. Our findings reveal that migrant street children had reduced odds of using SRH services compared to their counterparts. Other factors that predicted SRH uptake include age, schooling status and knowledge of Place of care for STI services. Implications for our study results point to the need for urban health studies to go beyond blanket uptake for RH services and understand practices among vulnerable children including migrant street children. RH service provider should design effective health outreach and delivery models to reach most at risk and hidden vulnerable populations in urban settings.