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APPROVAL

The dissertation of **VICTOR KABWE** is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts in Population Studies** by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

Scientific evidence has clearly shown that male circumcision reduces the risk of HIV infection-by providing partial protection in heterosexual men from contracting HIV by at least 60%.The UNAIDS 2009, reports that one of the key drivers of the HIV epidemic Southern Africa and in particularly in Zambia is the low levels of male circumcision rates among others. The 2007 Zambia Demographic and Health Survey indicated that only 11.4 % of the male youths were circumcised.

This study investigated parental knowledge levels, attitudes and practices towards infant and child circumcision in the era of HIV/AIDS among parents with male children under the age of 5 in selected Zambian communities. A systematic exploratory study was adopted to undertake this survey. Data was collected using quantitative methods and a total of 202 parents with male children aged below 5 years. Data processed and analysis was done using EPI-DATA and Statistical Package for Social Sciences Software (SPSS).

Generally, knowledge levels on whether respondents have heard about male, child and infant circumcision are high amongst all respondents. The findings of the survey revealed that despite 70% of the respondents reporting that they know that circumcision reduces one's chances of contracting HIV, only half (51%) of them believe that it reduces one's chances of contracting HIV. The study further shows that only 4% and 22% of the respondents with male children below the age of 1 year and between 1-5 years respectively have taken them for circumcision. Those that didn't take their children for circumcision cited reasons such as the procedure is painful, child will make their own decision when they grow up, lack of information on the benefits of infant and child circumcision and it wasn't necessary.

Finding reveal that health facilities where the major sources of information on male circumcision. Other sources included radio and television. There were differences in sources of information by respondent's educational levels, those with secondary and tertiary education cited sources such as television, radio, friends, newspaper and books, while those with no education, primary education only cited health facilities. In order to reach all everyone with the message, it is important that such dynamics are taken in to account. It's also worth pointing out that media campaigns to promote male circumcision have mainly focused on adult circumcision and not infant and child circumcision; hence it has not helped in promoting uptake of infant and child circumcision.

Data reveals that respondents had a negative attitude towards infant circumcision and a positive attitude towards child circumcision, with about three – quarters of the respondents disagreeing that all male children below the age of 1 year should be taken for circumcision. However, they agreed that all male children between the ages of 1 – 5 years should go for circumcision.

Findings indicate that even though male circumcision has been shown to reduce men's risk of becoming infected with HIV through heterosexual sex, few parents have taken their male children for male circumcision. Therefore there is need to provide more information about the benefits of infant and child circumcision and address the specific concerns some parents have such the process is painful, it's not necessary as highlighted in the report.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral treatment
ARVs	Antiretroviral Drugs
CIDRZ	Centre for infectious Disease Research in Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JPHIEGO	John Hopkins Program for International Education in Gynecology and Obstetrics
MC	Male Circumcision
NAC	National HIV/AIDS Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nation International Children Emergency Fund
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing