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The Sexual and Reproductive Health of Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Gloria Kimuli Seruwagi
PhD Candidate

Centre for Applied Childhood Studies
School of Human and Health Sciences
The University of Huddersfield (UK)



Presentation Outline

- Introduction to OVC
- OVC sexual and reproductive health
- Key issues
- What role for healthcare systems?



Introduction to Orphans & Vulnerable Children (OVC)

- 'OVC' origin
- Definition of 'Orphan' and 'Vulnerable child' (UNICEF/UNAIDS, 1999)
- Age limit subject of debate
- ❖ *Does definition detract attention from the RSH needs of older adolescents?*



OVC in Uganda

- 56% of Uganda's population are children
- In 2007 OVC number was 2.3 million (15% of the total children in the country), which rose to 7.5 million (the equivalent of 46% of all children) in 2008
- An estimated 45.6% of all Ugandan orphans HIV/AIDS-related
- Number projected to increase to 2,500,000 by 2010

(UNICEF 2007, 2006,2003;Wakhweya et al,2006; MLGSD 2004)



OVC Sexual & Reproductive Health

- Sexual vulnerability
- Early sex and cross-generational sex
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Maternal & Infant morbidity/morbidity
- Early marriages

"...If I stay here, I might be tempted to give in to these village men but when I get married to a hardworking man I shall be safe from getting AIDS and also live a better life in my own home..."

(Orphan girl, aged 16)

- HIV/AIDS and other STI
- ABC message?



Key Issues

- Model of Childhood/Adolescence?
- Service planning and delivery, specifically relating to OVC needs
- Policy-research-practice gap
- OVC context
- Gender aspect (*sexual abuse 1.5-3 times higher among girls*)
- Power issues



What role for health systems?

- Responsive health services
- Consultation with children & young people
- Training and practice
- Child protection?
- Information, advice and guidance



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