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The Sexual and Reproductive Health of Orphans and Vulnerable Children

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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
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
References


Foster, G. (1998). Today's children - challenges to child health promotion in countries with severe AIDS epidemics. AIDS Care, 10 (Suppl. 1), S17-S23


