

Abstract

Under Option II, Category C-54 Prevention program for general population

“Be Bold Campaign” reduces stigma and increases tests and service uptake

-Asok Kumar; asokji@yahoo.com

HIV prevalence is 1.4% in Andhra-Pradesh state (population 80 million), India. High prevalence, despite high awareness.

Campaign: Concept and Implementation:

“Be-Bold” Campaign, launched on December 1, 2006, aimed to **translate awareness into action/behavioral-change; reduce stigma associated with HIV; improve health service uptake by infected people; mainstream fight against HIV/AIDS by making it a people’s movement.**

Campaign messages, delivered through mass-media and mascot cartoon characters encouraged people to talk about AIDS; get tested; families to accept HIV+ members; doctors to treat HIV+ patients; teachers to teach infected/affected children; youth to say no to negative peer pressures.

Be-Bold was the message; HIV-tests the medium. Idea was that **more tests** help to identify more HIV+s; provide them early treatment; prevent inadvertent spreading by them; give better estimate of disease load for planning and resource allocation; normalize HIV tests, thereby reducing stigma

To improve access, HIV-testing-centers were increased from 286 to 677; adequate staff recruited, trained and positioned with kits. To pre-screen people taking tests, a self-assessment questionnaire on risk-behaviors/symptoms was published in newspapers and villages. Popular leaders got tested to inspire common people.

To treat those testing positive, took-up capacity building of doctors. These HIV+-people-friendly doctors were formed into “Bold Doctors clubs”. Increased ART centers. “0/7-initiative” taken-up to reduce vertical HIV-transmission. Organized PLHA congregations to reduce self-stigma.

Impact:

Campaign reduced stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, vindicated by increase in HIV-tests and service uptake by identified-positives.

Year	HIV tests	HIV+ identified	ANC HIV prevalence	Live on ART on Dec 31	HIV to TB referrals/ found TB+	TB to HIV referrals/ found HIV+	HIV+ deliveries
2005	496,312	50,791	1.9	2,135	11450/4,777	9444/1,926	2228
2006 ¹	925,381	72,576	1.4	6,468	21,959/5,006	16,240/2,465	2834
2007	1,542,809	100,857	1.1	25,021	39,247/8,973 [∇]	25,305/3184 [∇]	5032
1,666,397 tests done (107,417 HIV+ identified) in 13 months campaign from 1-12-2006							
1,331,952 tests done (127,514 HIV+ identified) in SIX years between 2000-2005.							

Perinatal nevirapine coverage increased.

On 7/December/2006 3800 PLHAs; and on 7/December/2007 8000 PLHAs boldly congregated to fight self-stigma.

Lesson-Learned:

HIV tests and access to health services reduces stigma. Stigma- reduction curtails spread of HIV

¹ Includes data of December 2006 also, which is part of Be Bold campaign period

[∇] data upto November 2007