

Mchinji VCT Qualitative Interviews
27752
22-07-2006
Joel Nkhonya

I: This is an interview by Joel Nkhonya on the date of 22nd July 2006 with the client ____ id#27752. As I have already said, we will chat a bit on our friends who were testing blood recently.

R: E-e-e.

I: Here at [VILLAGE] when people hear of blood testing, what do people say is involved in blood test?

R: They are happy with it.

I: Don't people get worried in any way, saying why have these people come?

R: Of course people are in different groups, others get worried to say: I maybe in the group to be found with the kachilombo.

I: Okay.

R: But there is a group of people who do not worry at all. What they want is to know how their body is.

[Some noise in the background]

I: Do your relatives excluding friends sit down and discuss about blood testing? These relatives can be brothers or sisters of yours. Do they discuss blood testing as a good thing or bad?

R: It's a good thing.

I: I don't know if our friends who were testing blood recently found you here?

R: Yes, they found me.

I: Did they give any counseling?

R: No.

I: They did not?

R: E-e-e.

I: Did you accept independently to have your blood tested or it was due to some external influences?

R: Yes I accepted.

I: Did your wife also agree to be tested?

R: She too accepted to be tested.

I: Did the VCT people test your blood without any counseling, or maybe you were only counseled at the beginning or at the end?

R: When they tested me, what happens is that they counsel a person according what has been found in his body.

I: What do people say about VCT on the two ways, the recent one where people hear their results instantly, as compared to the past where results could be told probably after a week or so? Which way between the two ways would you prefer?

R: For us here, we see that both ways are good. Because the end result is knowing your body.

I: Even if It takes some time?

R: No problems.

I: Okay...After the VCT people had gone did you sit down with your wife to share the results to say, they have found me so so?

R: Ey, we sat down and shared.

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: If possible, can you share me your results.

R: For the results I was not satisfied, but they begun by telling how the results were to be interpreted. So when the results were out they asked me that, according to what we explained earlier on, can you determine your results?

I: Okay.

R: But I told them that they have to explain to us.

I: Okay.

R: So they explained that you don't have the kachilombo of HIV.

I: Okay.

R: Then they asked me how I felt in my heart. I told them that am very happy as you have found me without kachilombo.

I: Okay.

R: Then they asked me some questions that: What will you be following so that you remain without the kachilombo?

I: okay, that was a nice question.

R: I told them prevention from sexual immorality and if not have ways of prevention so that the virus does not spread.

I: Yah yah.

R: So they asked me the question, what ways will you follow as of now so that you don't contract the kachilombo?

I: What did you respond?

R: I replied, not borrowing needles, avoid chiwerewere.

I: Yah.

R: But if you can't resist then you use a condom.

I: Okay.

R: Those were the stories we discussed that time.

I: Okay.

R: Indeed.

I: How did they explain on how the instruments work?

R: I can't remember everything, but I remember just part of it.

I: Go ahead with what you can remember.

R: They had one instrument white the other one unigold. Then come a pipe where they were putting the blood.

I: Okay.

R: And a needle which they used to prick and take blood. They explained that blood will be poured here and there pointing at the instruments so they continued that: upon pouring blood in, if two lines show up, it means you have kachilombo.

I: Okay.

R: But if one line appears on both, it means you don't have.

I: Okay.

R: So for me only one line showed up.

I: Okay.

R: That is how it was.

I: To you, where did you hear for the first time about VCT and HIV?

R: I heard it from the radio, then later from the hospital.

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: And you have said that you pray I don't know if your church pastors of catholic do play any role in advising the Christians about VCT and AIDS?

R: They take part in advising.

I: What do your priests or catechists say on VCT?

R: If we go by that, I am not one of the people who has ever been advised by church elders.

I: What I mean is that: Let's tomorrow on Sunday you happen to go to church and after church services not formal meeting as such.

R: Ok, that usually happens after prayers are over.

I: Okay.

R: That's what I am saying that after prayers I am not one of the people who listen.

I: Do you see any difference in the way the church people talk about VCT and the way government talks about VCT?

R: No there is no difference.

I: Do church people speak of condoms to their faithfuls?

R: No.

I: They are not free?

R: Of course this happens outside prayers. After the prayers are through its when people gather. They have a counselor who stands up and talks even mentions of condoms.

I: Okay.

R: Eyah.

I: Does your village head here at [VILLAGE] take time to advice his people on blood testing and AIDS?

R: No, I have not.

I: You mean the village head says nothing even when people are at a meeting?

R: Aaa I have never heard him say that.

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: How do people's lives change after being positive. You should not mention anybody's name even if you know them. How do their life change?

R: Because people are different, others say let me heed the advice given to me from my counselors.

I: Okay.

R: But there are others again think of just disappearing.

I: What things do such people do to just disappear?

R: Things like drinking poison.

I: How did you feel when you were told that you are ok without kachilombo?

R: I was very happy, filled with happiness.

I: Okay.

R: Indeed.

I: Didn't you have any worries that what will they tell me when you were waiting for the results?

R: Worries were not there because we were already questioned that, are you ready to receive your results?

I: Okay.

R: So I have took my time thinking to say if am found with it what will I do and I ended my worries during this time.

I: okay.

R: Eyah.

I: Who should have been blamed if both of you were with kachilombo?

R: I don't think if it was to be possible for one of us to point a finger at the other. It would not have been known between me and my wife who got the kachilombo for the other person.

I: Okay.

R: Eyah.

I: Of course am asking you this because if a couple is found with kachilombo, the tendency is that each person blames the other. The wife blames the husband and the husband blames the wife.

R: Ya, but it's difficult to tell.

I: Do you remember the very first year when you were visited by the VCT personnel? I hope this was not their first time to come here at your home.

R: It should be 2004 or 2003. It's when they came.

I: Didn't you have a chance to get tested when they came in 2004?

R: Of course even that time they were testing.

I: Okay.

R: And the chance to be tested was there.

I: But you did not?

R: I was one of them, only that they were testing urine and saliva.

I: Was it so?

R: Yes, then they could go with them to the government hospital for testing and bring the results later.

I: Okay.

R: Indeed.

I: after now that you know your status that you are okay, I don't know how many children do you have?

R: Only one.

I: Okay.

R: e-e-e

I: What do you think on the number of children you want to have?

R: In my life I needed to have four.

I: So should we say you are remaining with three more?

[Both laugh]

R: E-e-e.

I: Do people here in the village use condoms so that they prevent diseases apart from AIDS they are also other diseases which people can get through sexual intercourse?

R: Now when it comes to what happens in other couples houses on condom use, I can't know.

I: Okay.

R: E-ee-e.

I: But do people who have adolescents advise them on the dangers of HIV and the goodness of testing?

R: Yes they do.

I: Mainly what do they talk about?

R: Usually the adolescents have special counselors who advise them on changing times, that these are different days of a new generation.

I: Okay.

R: They emphasize that these years of this generation are troublesome.

I: Okay.

R: Such counselor explain to the adolescents that such diseases as HIV was not there, they were sexual diseases but which could be cured. But as of your generation there is AIDS. So need to take care because you may be meeting several partners but remember how to take care of yourself.

I: Okay.

R: If possible just stop chiwerewere but if you fail to resist then you can use a condom.

I: Okay.

R: Yah, those are the pieces of advice they tell.

I: Maybe in this village people sell condoms in their shops. Do people become comfortable to buy condoms during the day?

R: Yah.

I: Don't they feel shy that people going take them as promiscuous?

R: Not at all.

I: Like here in your village which places do people meet and discuss the issues of VCT and AIDS?

R: Like at school, church...

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: What about when playing bawo?

R: Yes they also discuss such issues.

I: Okay.

R: Eyah.

I: What about in places where men carve hoe-handles?

R: E-ee-e. Even where they make mates and even in football pitches.

I: Okay.

R: Indeed.

I: Between the youth and the elderly whom do you think are more free to discuss blood testing issues?

R: The youth

I: The youth?

R: E-e-e

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: Now as the VCT people came around in this village, it was also a VCT week for the whole Malawi. Did some people go to Mkanda to have their blood test during this week?

R: Yes, some people from this village went.

I: okay.

R: Because on Wednesday I went to the hospital with that chap and I was told that there was mzungu who was testing blood. But by that time Wednesday, they told me the materials for measuring were not yet ready.

I: Okay.

R: That is all, some went.

I: Now that you have been told that you are okay, what future plans do you have with your wife concerning your life?

R: Plans?

I: Yes. Plans pertaining to child-bearing and other things you may think of.

R: The plans are that as we have been found well, we need to be discussing that faithfulness is needed between us two.

I: Okay.

R: It means our life will be health in future. You need just to resist from sex.

I: Okay.

R: Then you can discuss of how many children to have either four or less.

I: Okay.

R: Eyah.

I: Is your wife also free to speak like you are doing to me?

R: Yes, she is free.

I: Okay.

R: Yah.

I: Most people say the man has powers in a family when I comes to deciding how many children a couple should have. Does your wife also speak or start the conversations?

R: Yes she starts the conversation.

I: Does she feel open and free to discuss such issues?

R: E-e-e.

I: It does happen at times that there are some people who hate discussing the VCT issues and once you start the conversation they even more out of the group. What do these people fear on blood testing?

R: Mainly it's worries that will I accept the results and hear the counseling from the

doctor?

I: Okay.

R: So mainly it's about thinking of being found with it that's why they are afraid. And that I will not accept the results.

I: When the VCT people came did they counsel you together with your wife or each one of you alone?

R: Separately.

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e

I: There are so many things which the survey people have been enquiring from you people since 2004. What should the survey people be doing, so that the project goes on well?

R: Aaaaah...

I: What do people say when we leave your houses, you people who are in the survey? I know that when strange people come in people's villages, there is usually talking which goes around. What do they say then?

R: Of course they are stories which are talked like, mainly its questions. People ask what were you chatting.

I: Okay.

R: We tell them, those people are research guys, and they do some work concerning AIDS. So I was chatting with them on how we should be conducting ourselves on HIV and blood test.

I: Okay.

R: I explain to them that their main aim is to explain to people about AIDS and prevention of kachilombo.

I: Do people show interest or not?

R: As I have already said others pay attention while others not. Others say had it been I was in the survey I would have been happy to be tested. Others say testing would just make them worried.

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: I don't know if you decided to get tested on your own or you decided to go because people personnel had arrived at your home.

R: It was me who decided without any force.

I: Were you discussing about VCT before you met the research people?

R: We were discussing, even before they came.

I: So it means it was not strange when the VCT people came to your home?

R: Yes, it was not strange.

I: Okay.

R: Eya.

I: Of course you have said the village head here does not play any role on VCT messages. But you hear the message either from the radio or from health people. Now if you compare the radio and the VCT people, where do you get the messages clear on radio or VCT people on blood testing?

R: We get the message clear from the counselors because it's direct. Because you can even ask questions if the message is from a counselor, unlike on the radio you don't have that chance on the radio you can't ask.

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: I don't know if you have any question or comments on our chatting today?

R: Here I can say I don't have a question but still more I have. Did you want to advise us or it was just chatting?

I: The aim was just to chat. Because the VCT people already did the job of advising when they came in form of counseling. But our purpose is to hear your views on the exercise of blood test. Just as you have been talking of different people reacting differently from different situations, so our aim is to find out people's reactions towards VCT. As you have already said that you were happy when you heard your negative results. Thus a reaction. But if the couples who have been found with it decide to

separate, thus a reaction too. In short these different reactions towards VCT will help very much to understand people's behavior and indeed how they react to VCT.

R: Okay, I have now understood.

I: Yes, that's why I was saying feel free to comment because all your comments will help the project to do well.

R: Okay.

I: do you know anybody in this village don't mention a name that was found with kachilombo?

R: I heard rumors of course.

I: When did you last talk about VCT?

R: We talk almost everyday but mostly now. Now because in the past it was only the radio which was talking about.

I: Okay.

R: We talk to each other, what id you get tested? Bur since it's a group of people others refuse, they say, what if I am found with it?

I: Okay.

R: Now when the survey came it was a nice thing. They started like you have done. At first, it was like you have done, they just chatted with us and the second journey, it's when they asked of urine and saliva.

I: Okay.

R: So they had the materials to keep the saliva and urine.

I: Okay.

R: Then they could explain that the results are like this like this.

I: Okay.

R: They went with the urine and saliva and brought the results later.

I: Okay.

R: When the results came they built a tent at a camp where people were going to collect their results. People were required to bring their identities and numbers for them to be given the results. So when one reached at the camp, they could match the identity brought by an individual with the one they had and if it matched, then a person could be given his results.

I: Do you know any sign as Mr. A of a person who is suffering from AIDS?

R: Like shingles, coughs like TB.

I: What about body appearance?

R: Body appearance of a person also changes.

I: Okay.

R: The body gets thin and hair looks weak.

I: Okay.

R: Eyah.

I: Why do people who have been found with kachilombo like hiding in most cases?

R: It's mainly because of worries which hinders them to tell more.

I: Okay.

R: Eyah.

I: What about being discriminated by fellow friends and villagers. Can't it be a reason for hiding?

R: Eya, people think so, and those who are not sick think they can't contract HIV. Others can't eat with AIDS people saying they can give them HIV.

I: Okay.

R: E-e-e.

I: If you don't have further questions let me thank you for sparing your time to respond to questions. We know during this time you would have done something but you have spent it with us. We don't take that for granted. Do you have any questions?

R: I don't have any, it's okay.

I: This marks the end of our interview with ___ id#27752 on the date of 22nd July 2006.

Interviewer Notes

This respondent preferred short answers even after probing. But otherwise good conversation.