Enrolment for HIV treatment is increasing - Uganda Cares

KEY ISSUE

The initiative aims at improving and accelerating direct access to life-saving care and HIV/Aids treatment to more people throughout the country in easily accessible locations and effectively delivers antiretroviral treatment to persons living with HIV/Aids in resource-constrained settings

Achievement. Last year, more than one million people tested for HIV/Aids in the country. This year Uganda Cares received 600,000 people enrolling for treatment.

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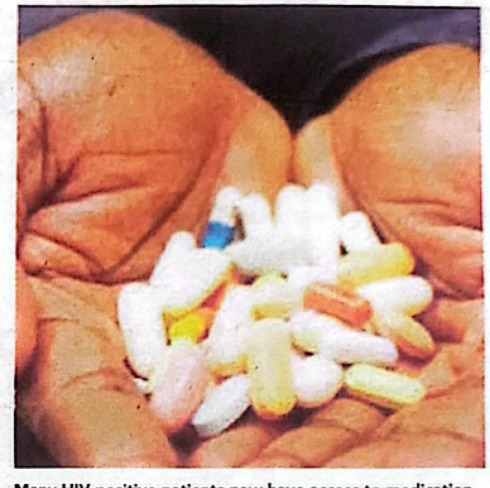
A number of strategies have been put in place in a bid to curb the spread of HIV/Aids in Uganda.

These, according to Methuselah Kahungu, the in charge of prevention of HIV/Aids Uganda Cares, include free HIV testing, free counseling services and creating platforms that advocate for HIV/Aids treatment.

"With support from some government health facilities and civil society organisations, there has been an increase in HIV awareness among Ugandans," Kahungu says. "We also encourage those that test HIV positive to enroll for treatment as early as possible."



Mr Kahungu says there is an increase in HIV awareness. FILE PHOTO



Many HIV-positive patients now have access to medication. FILE PHOTO

Kahungu observes that through these activities, 90 per cent of Uganda's population know about the HIV/Aids, with those affected wiling to enroll for treatment.

"Last year, more than one million people tested for HIV/Aids in in the country. This year we have received 600,000 people enrolling for treatment through our organisation and this is encouraging because it has reduced the number of deaths by the scourge," he says, adding that although some people have embraced the practice of testing, with some trekking long distances, there is still a section of people living in self-denial.

"A person can test from Kitgum and get 'positive' results but they find it hard to believe. This prompts them to travel somewhere else to make the same tests," he says. "On a good note there is a positive response towards acceptability. These days we have people who still look healthy with no visible signs of HIV/Aids that are willingly enrolling for treatment, this helps to keep them strong as well as reduce on the number of deaths," he says.

Since in, the 1990s Uganda has been struggling with the HIV/Aids epidemic that reached a prevalence rate of 15 per cent at its peak. It is estimated that currently about 1.2 million Ugandans are living with HIV - an equivalent to about 6.5 per cent of the total population.

Despite the country's policies to reduce the HIV prevalence, less than 45 per cent of people living with HIV receive the life-saving antiretroviral treatment (ART) since a number of people find them inaccessible thereby increasing the number of people dying due to Aids and HIV-related illnesses in the country.

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