TITLE: UTILIZATION OF INACTIVATED POLIO VACCINE AMONG CAREGIVERS WITH CHILDREN AGED 12 TO 23 MONTHS IN KALUNGU DISTRICT, UGANDA

Background: Uganda officially introduced IPV vaccine in May 2016 as part of the polio eradication and endgame strategy and integrated it into its routine immunization programme in addition to the Oral polio vaccine with a current coverage standing at 60% as of July 2017 hence scaling up of IPV administration remains challenged and so is polio eradication. We therefore aimed to determine factors associated with the utilization of injectable polio vaccine among caregivers in Kalungu district so as inform the implementation of the vaccine policy.

Methods: A community based cross-sectional study was conducted using mixed methods among a total of 406 caregivers to children aged 12-23 months through multi-stage systematic sampling using a standardized semi-structured questionnaire. Nine key informant interviews were conducted through purposive selection of healthcare givers based on their expertise. Modified Poisson regression and thematic content analysis were used to determine factors associated with IPV utilization among caregivers and health caregivers.

Results: 71% of the caregivers to children aged 12-23 months had utilized IPV in Kalungu district. Health caregivers and VHTs played a significant role in influencing vaccine utilization (APR 0.24,95% CI;0.12-047) and (APR 0.33,95% CI;0.18-0.58). Other factors associated with IPV utilization included costs incurred to the immunization point and caregiver's education level.

Conclusion: The current proportion of IPV utilization among caregivers to children aged 12-23 months is still below the recommended National coverage of 95%. Efforts to strengthen social mobilization and sensitization of caregivers through healthcare givers and VHTs on the benefits of utilizing IPV and all immunization services in general so as to increase awareness. Additionally; immunization outreaches should be strengthened in a bid to facilitate vaccine utilization by bringing services closer to the people.