

**TOPIC GUIDE FOR IDIS WITH HIV+ PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING WOMEN (V1.2, 9-08-2024).**

**Study Title: HIV care and antenatal seeking behavior patterns of pregnant and breast-feeding women during the previous COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda.**

ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Facilitator Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Audio file # \_\_\_\_\_

Date of IDI \_\_\_\_\_

**Socio-demographic information**

Participant type [*tick as appropriate*]: Pregnant  Breast-feeding

Community/town \_\_\_\_\_

How old are you? 18 – 34yrs  35+ yrs

Was that your first pregnancy? Yes  No

How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status: Married/living with partner  Separated/divorce  Single   
Widowed

Level of education: Never been to school  Primary  secondary  post-secondary

What do you do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years since diagnosis \_\_\_\_\_

Years of attendance to this clinic \_\_\_\_\_ Duration on ART

VL \_\_\_\_\_

What drugs you are currently being treated for apart from HIV? Probe for non-communicable diseases \_\_\_\_\_

**Warm up:**

1. Tell me what you think about positive women who were pregnant or breastfeeding during the previous COVID-19? How comfortable did you feel about the pregnancy during the previous COVID-19 pandemic? How did observing of the previous COVID-19 protocols of wearing a nose mask and washing or sanitizing women's hands regularly affect you.

**Knowledge, attitude and practices**

2. What are your thoughts and attitude towards the previous COVID-19? Where did it come from? Probe for causes of viral transmission from animals to humans. What were the

indigenous practices of managing the previous COVID-19. What strategies and interventions can prevent viral spread from animals to humans (primary prevention) or once it's in humans how can it be prevented from one person to another.?

3. Please tell me your experience of receiving pregnancy and general health care services during the previous COVID-19?
  - a) What was your motivation to access health care services during the previous COVID-19 pandemic?
  - a) What were the benefits of accessing care during the previous COVID-19 pandemic?
  - b) What were the risks of accessing care during the previous COVID-19 pandemic? How worried were you that you could contract the previous COVID-19 from the clinic?
  - c) How did you protect yourself when coming to the clinic?
  - d) How comfortable did you feel coming to this facility during the previous COVID-19? Did you feel unsafe here at the clinic?
  - e) How did observing SOPs such as social distancing, masks, handwashing, sanitizing etc). How did observing SOPs affect your clinic attendance?
4. What health services did you access accessed during covid-19 pandemic. How easy or difficult was it to access HIV care, ANC, vaccination or general medical care?
  - a) How did you relate to the health workers at the clinic? Were the staff they approachable.
  - b) How long did it take you to access care? Probe how much time did you usually spend at the clinic during Covid-19 pandemic?
  - c) Do you think the health facility did enough to protect you from Covid-19? Explain your answer in detail.
  - a) How happy or satisfied were you with the quality of service you receive at this institution during the previous COVID-19? Probe: what were you happy about or what made you sad? Probe changes in the Quality of service delivery observed during the previous COVID-19.
  - b) How much money did you spend for transport during the previous COVID-19?
5. Tell me about your experience using self-medication or of counter drugs if any? Explain source, reasons, and effectiveness.
6. Tell me about your experience using herbal medicine if any? Explain source, reasons, and effectiveness.
7. What information, did you receive regarding pregnancy or breastfeeding during the previous COVID-19 pandemic?
  - a) Where did you get information ie relatives, internet, adverts, radio, clinic, friends, etc
  - b) Concerns expressed to healthcare workers during the previous COVID-19 pandemic and response given
  - c) If encountered false information. Probe for reaction, information sources among others.

#### **Social or cultural norms**

8. Were you worried that other people may see you at the clinic during the previous COVID-19? Why don't you want others to see you?

- a. What are the socio-cultural or religious factors that may be hindered you from accessing health care during the previous COVID-19.
  - b) Probe for gender norms, social networks, stigma, empowerment, religion, health beliefs, and cultural practices) related to the previous COVID-19, HIV and Pregnancy/ANC
  - c) If accessed Herbal remedies during the previous COVID-19 or any other reason. Explain response.
  - d) How can social cultural issues for pregnant or breastfeeding women living with HIV be resolved during pandemics.
9. What information did you hear from the community as a pregnant or breast-feeding woman during the previous COVID-19 pandemic?
- a) Do you think it was rightful information about pregnant or breast-feeding women living with HIV during the previous COVID- 19?
  - b) reaction and for source of false information.
  - c) What strategies can be employed to resolve false information about pregnant or breast-feeding women living with HIV during the previous COVID- 19?

#### **Adherence to routine clinic appointments**

10. It is recommended that all women living with HIV adhere to their routine visits and ART, how difficult or easy was it for you to comply with the routine appointments during the previous COVID-19? What were the factors that enabled or hindered you from keeping their regular scheduled clinic appointments during the previous COVID-19 pandemic?
- Limited space for social distancing, poor handwashing facilities.
- a. Probe for duration of missed appointment.
  - b. If missed appointment affected ART adherence
  - c. How did the clinic or facility monitor or follow up on you to ensure that you come to the clinic at the appropriate day and time? Did they send you reminders?
  - d. What can be done to ensure proper adherence to clinical scheduled appointments among pregnant or breastfeeding women living with HIV during a disease outbreak?

#### **Adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) or PMTCT.**

11. How easy or difficult was it for you to adhere to ART during pregnancy and breastfeeding in the previous COVID-19 pandemic? How did the previous COVID-19 affect your compliance to the treatment regimens?
- a) How were you able to collect medication consistently from the clinic, just like you were doing before the previous COVID-19 period. If missed taking drugs daily or on time. Explain reasons.
  - b) What were the specific challenges that pregnancy posed to adherence during the previous COVID-19? About the side-effects that pregnant women suffer from their treatment and how this affects adherence.

- c) What support did you receive to enable you adhere to medication during the pandemic? Probe: community or home delivery of medicine, consulting with the doctor on the telephone (telemedicine); support visits from community health workers.

**Adherence to Antenatal (ANC) visits.**

- 12. What were the main challenges you faced accessing antenatal care in your facility during the previous COVID-19 pandemic?
  - a) If presented late or early for ANC during the previous COVID- Pandemic
  - b) About reasons for presenting late for antenatal care during the previous COVID - 19 pandemic.
  - c) For barriers including social cultural norms, disclosure, stigma, intimate partner violence, financial constraints, uncertainty about pregnancy, etc.
  - d) What do you think can be done differently to enable women to present early for antenatal care during a disease outbreak?
  - e) What do you think can be done to overcome the effect of the previous COVID-19 on your ANC attendance?

**Conclusion**

Is there anything else you would like to add to what we have discussed?

**THANK YOU**