

## TANGA AIDS WORKING GROUP

TAWG INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT OF HIV/AIDS CASES

PRESENTED AT THE VIDEO CONFERENCE ON  
"THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN THE MANAGEMENT  
OF AIDS CASES" AT THE DISTANT LEARNING CENTER DAR ES  
SALAAM – TANZANIA – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2005

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## BRIEF HISTORY

- TAWG is a Non-Government Organization born in 1992 by a group of Health professional organized themselves as a team of counsellors and care providers.
- The team is collaborating with traditional healers to provide low cost treatments to People Living with HIV/AIDS for 12 years now.
- The collaboration has extended to involve Training to THs' and Research on Medicinal Plants.

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## WHY IK

- This was after observing AIDS patients recovering from bed after the use of Herbal remedies.
- The existing health services are unaffordable by the poor while TRM offers opportunity for reaching the poor at a little added cost.
- THs provides holistic care to their clients thus they are accepted, respected and have credibility in the community.

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## Why IK ...

- THs are always available in the community. The healer ration to population is estimated at 1:350 in Tz. while that of Medical Doctors is 1:20,000.
- No of effective care or vaccine against HIV infection Note: 2.2 million Tanzanian are HIV +ve only 400,000 are planned for access ARV. Focus for alternative form of therapy for the rest of the clients is highly needed.
- Collaboration will provide opportunities for sharing knowledge in Health Management

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## OBJECTIVE OF TAWG IK PROGRAM

- To provide effective low cost herbal remedies to treat opportunistic infection associated with HIV/AIDS.
- To conduct research on promising herbs.
- To ensure sustainable supply of medicinal plants in use through conservation and cultivation of the herbal medicinal plants

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## Objective ....

- To raise awareness among THs' to safe guard both THs and their clients from being infected during their practices.
- To build capacity of healers in providing community education and care
- To build and strengthen collaboration between traditional and modern health systems

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## ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HERBAL MEDICINE

- Provision of low cost herbal treatment to treat Opportunistic Infection in People Living with HIV/AIDS.
- Training of THs' on basic HIV/AIDS Knowledge, Safer Working Environment, counseling, referral criteria and community mobilization.
- Knowledge exchange meetings between THP.
- Identification of new promising herbal plant remedies.
- Conducting observational efficacy studies on Medicinal plants.

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## TREATMENT OF OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTION WITH HERBAL REMEDIES

- Clients are enrolled after VCT
- Clients are dispensed with herbal remedies prescribed by healers,
- Patients are treated for free. We compensate healer.
- Medicines are given in a powder form to make tea or mix with coconut/water for topical application.

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## Treatment ...

- Clients are monitored by Professional Health Worker every two weeks at the clinic.
- Initial treatment is for six months.
- Serious patients are followed up at their homes.

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### WHAT DO HERBS HELP

- Increase appetite
- Gain weight
- Stops diarrhea
- Reduces fever
- Clears up oral thrush
- Resolves skin rash and fungus
- Treats herpes zoster
- Heals ulcers

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### PATIENTS RESULTS

- Patients begin to improve between 1-4 weeks
- Survival rate is 2-5 years some patient have 12 years now.
- Medicines have not proved helpful in advanced stages of HIV/AIDS.
- Patient uses the herbs for treatment or prevention of Opportunistic Infection.

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### Results ....

- Patients on treatment throughout remain health though in some cases the immunity status may be down. This type of patients dies of short illness and are not bed ridden.
- Patients who leaves treatment for a long term after a period of recovery won't benefit from the same herbs in the second episode of Opportunistic Infection

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## Results ....

- Our goal is effective treatment. We provide any treatment traditional on conventional that contribute to the patient well being.
- Note: Patients improvements has priority over research.

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## ACHIEVEMENTS

- TAWG has so far treated 4,500 AIDS patients with Opportunistic Infection with herbal medicines.
- Currently we have 1,300 patients from six treatment centers.
- Build capacity of healers to assess patients progress.
- Improved quality of life of PLHAs
- Opened way for observational clinical studies.

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## OUTCOME OF TAWG TREATMENT PROGRAM WITH HERBS

- Kept more people alive hence maintaining the workforce and reducing the newly orphaned children.
- Helped the Govt. in respective Districts to -
  - Reduce resources spent on Care
  - Reduce the patients load to hospital
  - Reduce the cost of patients treatment.

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## CHALLENGES

- Increasing number of clients seeking services from TAWG leading to strain on available resources.
- Failure to cope with increasing appetite.
- Lack of cooperation between the traditional health system and modern health system.
- Bulkiness of the herbs – stigma
- Environmental distribution.

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## WAY FORWARD

- Continue providing low cost treatment to PLHA'S.
- Conservation and cultivation of the medicinal plants.
- Research on promising herbs
- Process validation for the herbs in use
- Establish a sustainable partnership between THs and formal Health system.
- Developing an educational booklet on Local Medicinal plants for home health care.

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## EXPECTED OUTCOME

- Renewal of Hope among poor PLHA'S through access to low cost treatment .
- Evidence based validation will benefit Healers and users.
- Sustainable supply of this medicine plants will be entranced.
- Forged links between THs and BHW's
- Replication of effective best practices within the country and Region

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## CONCLUSION

- Indigenous Knowledge and plant remedies are efficacious and safe in treatment of Opportunistic Infection in HIV/AIDS patients. Lets explore them, document them, research on them and use them to improve health care of our communities

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THANK YOU

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