

TITLE: PILOT ASSESSMENT OF THE NUTRITIONAL IMPACT AND ACCEPTABILITY OF FOOD RATIONS PROVIDED TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN UGANDA

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LEARNING OUTCOME: To describe the nutritional status impact of a feeding program to improve food security and mitigate the effect of HIV infection in Uganda.

TEXT: Food assistance in the form of supplemental rations of corn-soy blend (CSB) and soy oil was provided to 12,000 households impacted by HIV/AIDS in Uganda through a Food for Peace Title II HIV/AIDS Initiative. This study was to determine impact of the program on nutritional status, other health indicators, and quality of life for a subset of the beneficiaries. A total of 154 complete records were analyzed, including 97 primary beneficiaries (68 HIV-infected adults and 29 orphans) and 57 secondary beneficiaries. Improved weight of up to 3 kg was seen in 43% and more than 3 kg in 32% of primary beneficiaries ($p < 0.05$). Gains in mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) were seen in 73% ($p < 0.05$) of beneficiaries. Both weight and handgrip improvements were seen in secondary beneficiaries ($p = 0.000$) with similar MUAC improvements as the primary beneficiaries. Diet intake surveys showed increases in both the numbers of meals per day and food groups consumed. Reduced incidence of symptoms and other illnesses were reduced from 83% to 71% of beneficiaries and the average number of days ill decreased from 25 at baseline to 5 by quarter four. Overall quality of life items were improved for 77% of beneficiaries. Benefit was perceived by 74% of the beneficiaries. The CSB and soy oil rations were well-accepted by both primary and secondary beneficiaries. This food assistance program improved nutritional, other health, and quality of life measures over the 12 month pilot measurement trial.

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