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EGYPT

CASE STUDY

Clinics Help Prevent HIV/AIDS

Fighting HIV/AIDS by preventing sexually transmitted infections



Photo: FHI/Doaa Oraby

A renovated clinic in Cairo provides patients with education about preventing STIs and HIV/AIDS. The clinics also use improved record-keeping techniques.

“Now I am better informed about how to counsel my clients and manage them in a resource-constrained setting,” said one health-care provider who attended a USAID training session.

Telling Our Story
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Challenge

One of the keys to implementing an effective HIV/AIDS program is to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). High rates of STIs signal a high likelihood of HIV/AIDS transmission. Furthermore, counseling people who have STIs or HIV and explaining the risks associated with unsafe sexual practices is critical to preventing the spread of these diseases. Yet the social taboos surrounding STIs in countries such as Egypt make it difficult to hold open discussions on prevention and treatment. The result is that infected people are reluctant to seek medical care, infected partners are not treated, and doctors are shy to offer advice about treatment and prevention.

Initiative

In collaboration with the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, USAID has embarked on a comprehensive STI prevention program in collaboration with Egypt’s health ministry. The program created national guidelines for STI management, training manuals for frontline service providers, and a chart that details common infections and nationally available treatments. The program put in place education programs about risky behaviors and prevention, voluntary counseling and testing services, and a confidential hotline. Additionally, the program established pilot clinics to offer these services.

Results

The program has increased awareness among health care providers of the importance of treating and preventing sexually transmitted infections as a means to stem HIV infection. Twenty-five doctors from Cairo and Alexandria hospitals have attended train-the-trainer courses for STI management and are now better informed about prevention and treatment options. The first pilot clinic in Cairo was inaugurated in June 2006. It provides a comfortable and clean environment for consultation and treatment. The new clinics are mitigating the negative stigma surrounding STIs and encouraging people to seek health care services, increasing their awareness of STIs and ultimately helping to fight the spread of HIV/AIDS.