

# Community Responses In Addressing Sexual Violence

S. Nduta, B. Buluma, C. Ajema  
Liverpool VCT, Care and Treatment (LVCT)

## Introduction:

Sexual violence is a global public health problem increasing survivors' susceptibility to HIV/STIs. Studies have shown that community is integral in addressing sexual violence as it's the scene of crime and harbors health and legal systems. In Kenya, there are no clear guidelines on the role of the community in addressing sexual violence and this affects their responses.

A study conducted by LVCT in 2008 sought to establish existing requirements of maintaining an evidence chain by community, health and criminal justice systems in the context of post rape care in Kenya.

## Results:

- Data revealed knowledge gaps and ignorance by community on available post rape care services.
- There was lack of/delayed reporting of sexual violence cases to police and/or hospital hence probability of community members not accessing timely prophylaxis for HIV/STIs and pregnancy.
- Social-cultural barriers such as alternative forms of justice were found to hinder pursuit of justice especially in sexual violence cases within families.

## Conclusions:

- Survivors' vulnerability to HIV/STIs increases when comprehensive post rape care is not prioritized.
- There's need to develop communication strategies for communities so that their roles and expected responses in addressing sexual violence are understood.
- Efforts to establish relationship between existing traditional and formal health and legal structures should be made.

## Methods:

- Ethical approval was obtained from Kenyatta National Hospital review board.
- A cross-sectional design was utilized.
- Respondents were purposively selected from 3 provinces.
- 13 focus group discussions and 9 in-depth interviews were held with community members and leaders respectively.
- Data were analyzed using NVIVO 8.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:  Population Council