

## Quality of Care of Medical Male Circumcisions: A Non-Negotiable for Right to Care

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**Abstract :** Background: Medical Male Circumcision (MMC) is part of a comprehensive HIV prevention strategy. The quality of MMC done at Right To Care (RtC) sites is maintained by Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) based on findings of assessments by internal and independent external assessors who evaluate such parameters as the quality of the surgical procedure, infection control, etc. There are 12 RtC MMC teams in Mpumalanga, two of which are headed by Medical Officers and 10 by Clinical Associates (Clin A). Objectives: To compare the quality (i) of care rendered at doctor headed sites (DHS) versus Clin A headed sites (CHS); (ii) of CQI assessments (external versus internal). Methodology: A retrospective review of data from RightMax™ (a novel RtC data management system) and CQI reports (external and internal) was done. CQI assessment scores of October 2015 and October 2016 were taken as the baseline and latest respectively. Four sites with 745-810 circumcisions per annum were purposively selected; the two DHS (group A) and two CHS (group B). Statistical analyses were conducted using R (2017 version). Results: There were no significant difference in latest CQI scores between the two groups (DHS and CHS) (Anova,  $F = 1.97$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $P = 0.165$ ); between internal and external CQI assessment scores (Anova,  $F = 2.251$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $P = 0.139$ ) or among the individual sites (Anova,  $F = 1.095$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $P = 0.341$ ). Of the total of 16 adverse events reported by the four sites in the 12 months reviewed (all were infections), there was no statistical evidence that the documented severity of the infection was different for DHS and CHS (Fisher's exact test,  $p$ -value = 0.269). Conclusion: At RtC VMMC sites in Mpumalanga, internal and external/independent CQI assessments are comparable, and quality of care of VMMC is standardized with the performance of well-supervised clinical associates comparing well with those of medical officers.

**Keywords :** adverse events, Right to Care, male medical circumcision, continuous quality improvement

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