

Name: Maction Komwa

Defense Date: June 9, 2011

Title: The Impact Of HIV/AIDS On Rural Agricultural Households In Mayuge District In Southeastern Uganda

Dissertation Co-Directors: Dr. Kathryn H. Jacobsen and Dr. Dawn C. Parker

Committee: Dr. Susan Crate, Dr. David Armor and Dr. Todd Benson

ABSTRACT

The spread of HIV/AIDS has become a socioeconomic burden in many countries, including Uganda. This dissertation was conducted in the Mayuge district in southeastern Uganda to: 1) examine the interrelationship between HIV/AIDS, labor availability, agricultural productivity, household resources, food consumption, and health status using qualitative research methods; 2) evaluate Ugandan beliefs about HIV/AIDS and diet, work, and health behaviors using both qualitative and quantitative methods; and 3) examine the relationship between food calorie availability, food security, and household HIV status using ordinary least squares (OLS) and logistic regression techniques that integrate household caloric availability/food security and socioeconomic status.

The research study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. A total of 39 key informants were interviewed in 2006 using qualitative methods. The analysis revealed that household labor quality and quantity is reduced due to the sickness of the affected member. This situation compromises the ability of households to cultivate highly-nutritious crops, as they choose to substitute nutrient-rich crops with less intensive crops which often have lower nutrition values. Additionally, the study found that women's rights to land ownership often becomes a problem after the death of their husbands.

A quantitative cross-sectional survey of 246 households was conducted in 2007. An analysis of beliefs about HIV/AIDS and diet, work, and health behaviors showed that the majority of the participants were knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS. A high proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS were eating following the advice of health experts to more fruits and vegetables than their family members in order to maintain their health. However, people with HIV were not working fewer hours to save their energy, an activity also recommended by local leaders. The study also found that HIV-affected households were more likely to be food insecure, and they had lower caloric availability per adult equivalent than HIV-unaffected households. Food insecurity was most common among households with large numbers of residents, low incomes, and small or no plots of cultivated land.

The present study highlights the dynamic linkages between HIV/AIDS, agricultural productivity, and socio-economic characteristics. The findings contribute to the existing scientific literature by suggesting the urgency of governments and policymakers to respond to HIV/AIDS by improving and promoting agricultural productivity and food security among vulnerable rural households.