Historical Perspective of HIV In Uganda and Rakai Health Science Program, 1988-2019

David Serwadda
Rakai Health Science Program
Topics

- History of HIV in Uganda
- Introduction to Rakai Health Science Program
Aggressive Kaposi’s Sarcoma, In Uganda;1982-


Further experience with Kaposi’s sarcoma in Uganda

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Summary Four Ugandan patients (1 woman, 3 men) with generalized Kaposi’s sarcoma (KS) were seen in the Uganda Cancer Institute between October 1983 and December 1984. They presented with generalized lymphadenopathy, plaques/nodules on the body, general swelling of the head, oral and visceral involvement and respiratory distress. Initial responses to adriamycin as a single agent or a combination chemotherapy of actinomycin D, vincristine, adriamycin and imidazole carboxamide appeared to be favourable but no sustained response was obtained. Serological tests for human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV-II) antibodies were positive in all 4 cases.
SLIM disease

Mysterious disease kills 100 people in Rakai

A STRANGE killer disease has struck the District of Rakai in South Uganda, killing at least 100 people within a two-week period.

The disease, which is called 'SLIM', began with symptoms of fever, diarrhea, and vomiting, and then progressed to severe malnutrition and dehydration. Many patients died within days of diagnosis.

The outbreak was first reported on December 28, 1984, by the local media. Since then, efforts have been made to identify the cause and halt the spread of the disease.

The government has set up a task force to investigate the cause of the outbreak and to develop strategies to prevent its spread. Meanwhile, people are being advised to practice good hygiene and to seek medical attention at the first sign of illness.

Okeny's comparison, hopeless, ridiculous

Nestor Okeny, a resident of Rakai, has compared the situation to the one in the 1980s, when the country was on the brink of a major famine.

"We are facing a similar situation," Okeny said. "People are dying of hunger and disease, and the government is not doing enough to help.

"I don't think the authorities are taking the situation seriously," he added. "We have been told that the disease is under control, but I don't believe it."

Royal family on hit list

The newspaper also reports that the royal family is on the hit list of a group of anti-government protesters who have been targeting government officials and public figures.

"We have received information that the royal family is on the list," the paper reports. "The group is said to be planning an attack on the royal palace soon.

"We are taking all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the royal family," a palace official said.

Dollar likely to fall in 1985

Economists are predicting that the dollar is likely to fall in 1985, as a result of the current economic crisis.

"The dollar is facing a tough year," said one economist. "The economic crisis in the US is not going to get better anytime soon, and this will have a negative impact on the dollar.

"We are expecting a significant depreciation of the dollar in the coming year," he added. "This will have a ripple effect on other currencies as well."

Dollar reaches new high of 3.17 marks in late September.
Health center visit to Masaka and Rakai district

- In January 1985
  - A medical team: (Drs Nelson Sewankambo, Roy Mugerwa, Bob Downing, Ann Bailey and David Serwadda)
  - Clinical examination on medical ward and clinical sample taken
  - Kitovu Hospital, Masaka referral Hospital and Kalisizo health center, Rakai
Why rural Rakai?
An HIV epicenter

Proposal to study the dynamics of HIV transmission in Rakai

- 1986-Proposal to study dynamics of HIV transmission sent to CDC
- 1987-Dr Jonathan Kaplan, CDC sends proposal to USAID Washington D.C.
- 1987 USAID contact Dr Maria Wawer, Columbia Univ., as possible collaborator on this study
The core team-1988

- Dr Stan Musgrave
  Research fellow, Columbia University

- Dr David Serwadda
  Makerere University

- Mr Semiyanga
  Driver

- Ms Rose Mirembe,
  Administrative Assistant
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<th>Rakai Project -1988</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Start operation based from Uganda</td>
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<td>- Virus Research Institute with three people, Dr Stan Musgrave technical advisor, Mr Semiyaga, driver and Ms Rose Mirembe, secretary</td>
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<th>Field work-Rakai-1989</th>
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<td>- First field work started in 1989</td>
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Community Cohort:
• ~ 1,200 adults
All activities were initially conducted in Milano Inn in Kyotera town.
Personnel/activities in the early days
2004: Transition from Rakai Project to Rakai Health Science Program

- In 2004 the Rakai Project had been in existence for about 15 years with a diverse research portfolio.

- Project have a defined period of time~5yrs.

- 2004-Rakai Project renamed Rakai Health Science Program.
Rakai in 1998 and 2008
Rakai communities and participants
Collaborations

Key Partners and Collaborators

- NIH: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
- The Republic of Uganda Ministry of Health
- CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
- University of San Diego
- London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
- Imperial College London
- University of Edinburgh
- Karolinska Institutet
- University of Oxfrod
- Big Data Institute