

BACKGROUND

HIV self-testing (HIVST) is an HIV testing approach that may appeal to hard-to-reach individuals who require frequent HIV testing. Although HIVST kits have become available in pharmacies outlets, majority of people still find it hard to purchase HIVST kit due to the high cost. To increase access, tackle pricing policies and promote uptake of HIVST in Abuja, we implemented price subsidy on HIVST kits at the pharmacy outlets.

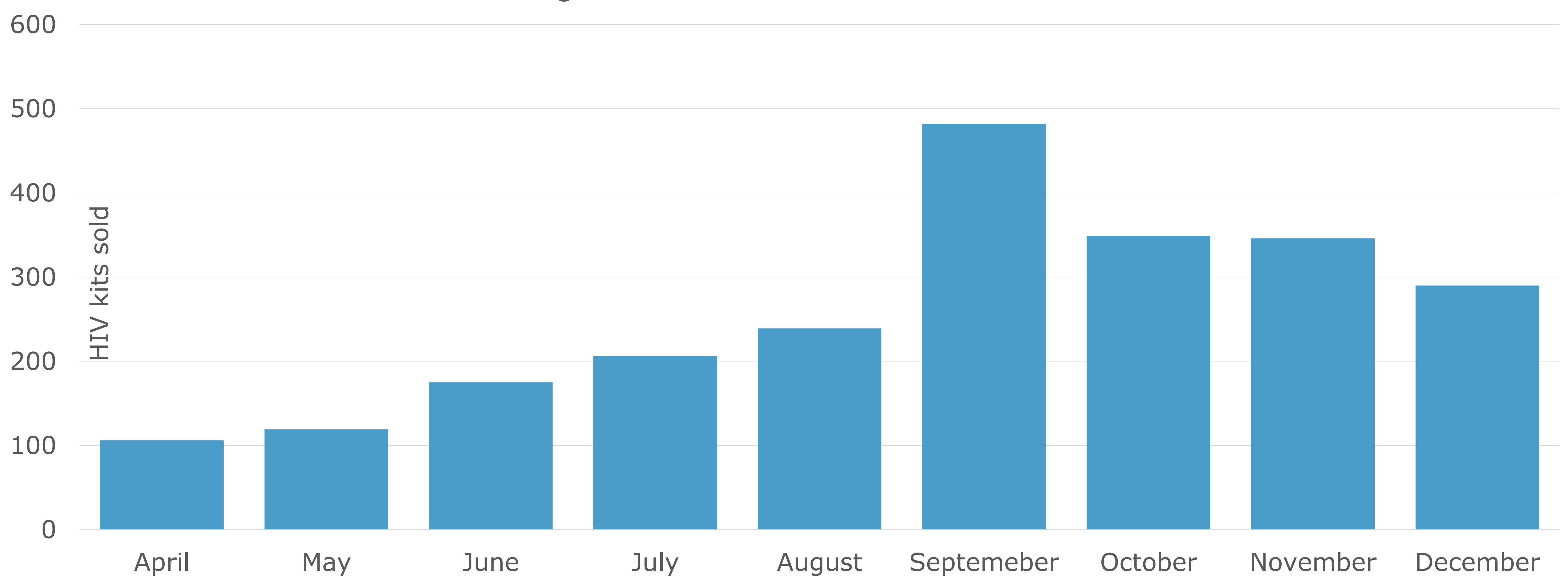


Methods

Society for Family Health conducted a pilot implementation between April – December 2022 in Abuja, Nigeria. Sixty pharmacies were recruited using the eligibility criteria which includes: registered with the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria, stocking or willing to stock HIVST and provide data on units sold per month. From September to December 2022, subsidized blood based HIVST kits were gotten from JHPIEGO and distributed to pharmacies already stocking oral fluid based HIVST kits at a retail price of N500 (1.10USD). The data from baseline and follow-up implementation were analysed quantitatively through the total number HIV test kits sold before and during the subsidy.

Results

'Progressions of HIV self test kits sold'



Our findings showed that there was increase in the sales of HIVST kits during the subsidy period. Prior to the subsidy (from April to August 2022), pharmacies sold a total of 207 oral fluid HIVST kits at the rate of 1,500 – 2,500(3.31USD - 5.51USD) while from September to December (period of subsidy), the pharmacies sold a total number of 365 Oral fluid HIVST kits and 569 blood based HIVST kits at the rate of N500 (1.10USD).

Conclusion

While HIVST has become an acceptable method of testing due to the confidentiality and privacy it provides, high cost of HIVST kits hinders uptake. The introduction of price subsidy on HIVST made a remarkable impact in improving the demand and uptake of HIVST among priority audience, those in hard-to-reach areas, undeserved communities, and the general populations.

Acknowledgement

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