



# The Role of Psychosocial Support Groups in Improving Viral Load Uptake and Suppression among Persons Living with HIV with Alcohol Use Disorder; Saboti Sub County Hospital Trans Nzoia County

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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The achievement of viral load suppression requires strict compliance to Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HAART) treatment regimens in HIV-infected patients.
- There is a historical association of alcohol use disorder with non-compliance to medical treatment.
- Studies demonstrate that alcohol consumption is associated with non adherence to ART.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- In February 2020, Saboti Sub County hospital Comprehensive Care Clinic (CCC) had a viral load (VL) suppression of 86.1% and a VL uptake of 13.7%.
- Having achieved good results in improving VL suppression and retention among its clients through the use of Psychosocial Support Groups (PSSGs), the facility chose this approach to support clients with alcohol use disorder.

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# OBJECTIVES

- 1) To scale up Viral Load (VL) uptake among PLHIV with alcohol use disorder at Saboti CCC from 86.7 % to >95% through use of targeted PSSGs.
- 2) To improve VL suppression among PLHIV with alcohol use disorder at the Saboti CCC from 7.7% to >95% through use of targeted PSSGs.

# METHODOLOGY

- Clients with alcohol use disorder were identified using the CAGE-AID Screening tool by the CCC Clinician.
- They were then enrolled into a facility based PSSG for PLHIV with alcohol use disorder after consenting.
- CCC Peer educators also identified other eligible clients that were missed out.
- The clients were assured of confidentiality and privacy.
- 19 clients (nine males, ten females) screened positive and all consented for enrolment in a facility based PSSG after sensitization.

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# METHODOLOGY

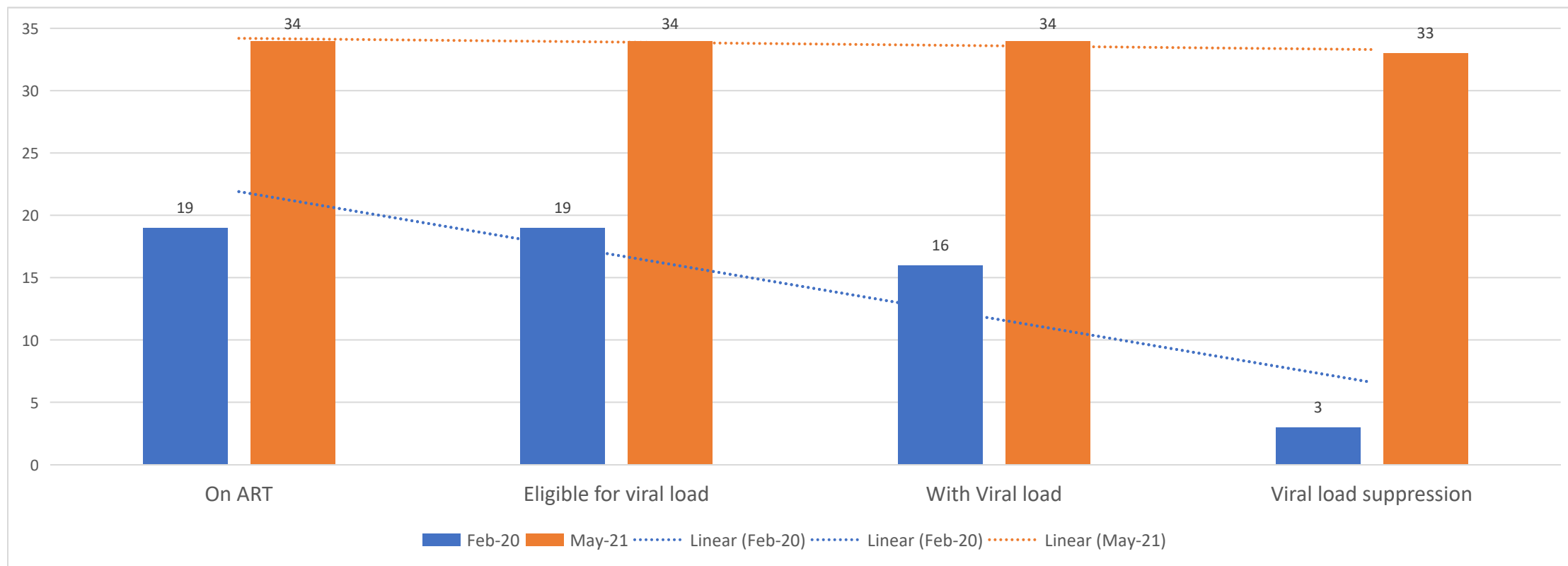
- To break the ice, the clinician gave them a non-judgemental briefing and gave them a chance to share their experiences.
- Clinic appointment dates were harmonized to facilitate PSSG meetings.
- Treatment buddies were identified and selected among the cohort.
- Monthly PSSG activities included: treatment literacy sessions, peer case management, individual briefing on alcohol intake and ART adherence and addressing challenges.

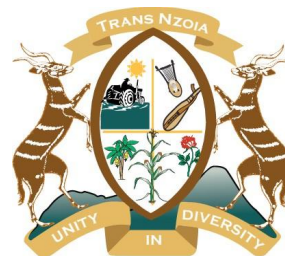


STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



# FINDINGS





## FINDINGS

- Nineteen clients were initially enrolled (10 female, 9 male), as at May 2021 the PSSG had 32 members (17 female, 15 male) following peer referral.
- VL uptake was 100% (19/19) from 86.7%
- VL suppression improved to 94.7% from 7.7%.



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# FINDINGS

- The overall VL suppression of the group currently stands at 96%.
- Three clients have not taken alcohol for one year now.
- The PSSG achieved 100% retention.



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# CHALLENGES

- 1) Strong feeling of stigma and discrimination initially
- 2) Knowledge and skill to have them reduce or stop alcohol

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# CONCLUSION

- 1) PSSGs are useful forums for positive peer support and influence
- 2) PSSGs can improve HIV treatment outcomes among PLHIV.
- 3) PSSGs are an inexpensive approach for differentiated care to PLHIV with alcoholism;
- 4) PSSGs improve HIV treatment outcomes.