

Despite consuming meat from Anthrax-infected animals, participants reported no infections, attributing this to folk practices.

Unearthing folk methods for Anthrax prevention. A case study in Nyilit Parish, Kween District.

Authors: Allan Billington Mukumbwa¹, Lydia Pedun Aisu¹, Leonard Bufumbo¹, Glory Mkandawire¹, Mabel Naibere¹, Paul Odeke¹, Emmanuel Kayongo¹, Denis Alioni¹, Anena Beverly¹, Sheila Nyakwezi², Peter Kwemboi³, Philly Musobo³

Affiliations:

1. Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs
2. USAID-Uganda
3. Kween District Local Government

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE

Since 2015, Kween district has faced recurring Anthrax, particularly in the lower belt. In Nyilit parish, the community has developed resilient practices to prevent the spread of the disease. This study investigates and documents community-based practices for controlling and preventing Anthrax infections in humans.

METHODS.

A cross-sectional participatory qualitative design was employed to explore the lived experiences of the Nyilit community during Anthrax outbreaks. Participatory action media, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were conducted over two days involving community members, leaders, and those in the meat value chain.

RESULTS

A total of 45 participants categorized as community members, leaders, and people working in the meat value chain participated in the activity. A total of 8 participated in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with veterinary staff and leaders. Group discussions revealed that community members employ folk meat handling and preparation methods to ensure safety.



Figure 1. Community members mapping their community during the participatory action media activity.

This includes wearing polyethene bags as gloves while slaughtering, pouring boiling point water onto meat, smoking meat to prevent blood dripping, and multiple boiling of meat with the addition of baking soda in subsequent boiling. These practices have evolved as the outbreaks happen. Despite consuming meat from anthrax-infected animals, participants reported no infections, attributing this to folk practices. KIIs revealed that community members recognize black itchy spots as signs of Anthrax after getting in direct contact with meat from dead animals. Participants relied on local drug shops for treatment. It was perceived that women rarely get infected with anthrax.

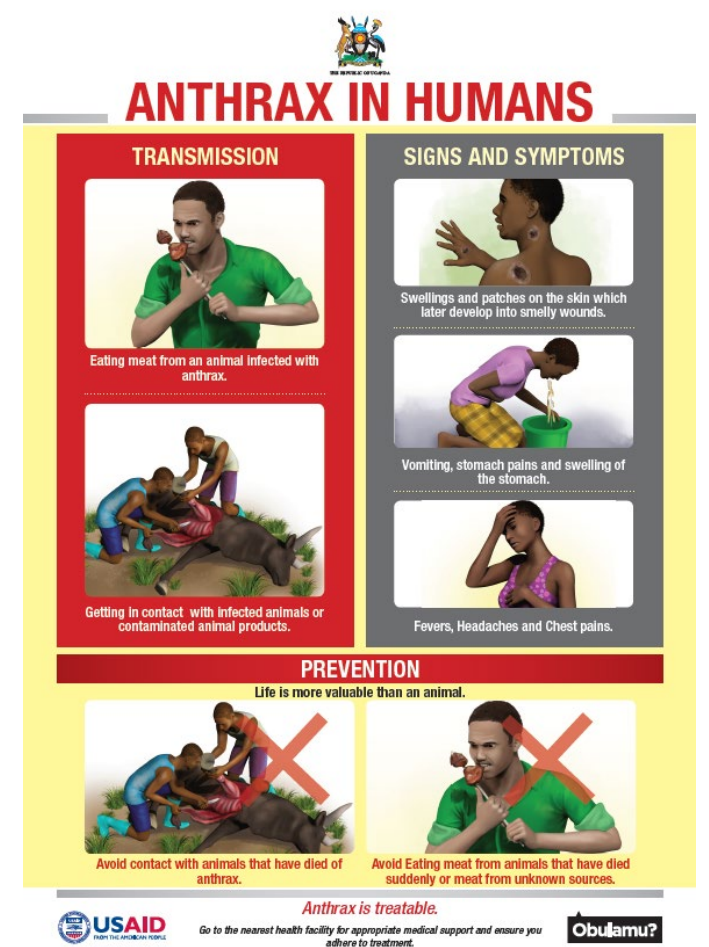


Figure 2. A trigger poster showing Anthrax in humans.

CONCLUSIONS.

We presented evidence of folk responses to Anthrax prevention in Nyilit parish of Kween district. As a hard-to-reach community, we suggest a further understanding of these folk responses and how messaging can be developed to prevent Anthrax.