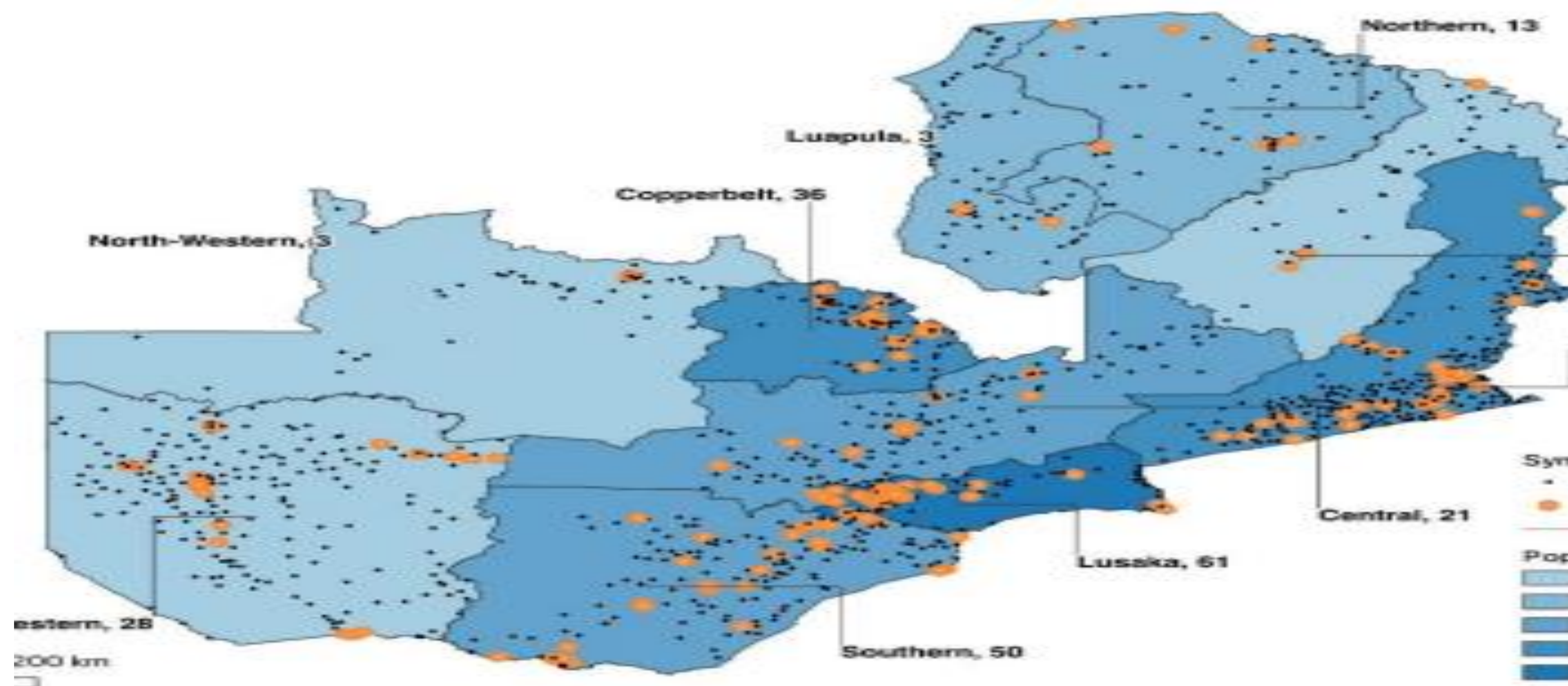


How outreach service models are improving prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) in the Copperbelt province, Zambia.

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Introduction

In Zambia, 25-30% of infants born to mothers living with HIV will also acquire HIV without treatment. To address this, USAID DISCOVER-Health, implemented by JSI, developed comprehensive strategies for testing, prevention, and treatment of women living with HIV and their newborn babies. The aim was to reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission rates, through increasing access to HIV services and improving the overall well-being of mothers and children affected by HIV.

Lessons Learnt

In 2018, the project structured a direct service delivery (DSD) model across 22 health posts and non-conventional sites in the Copperbelt province. The strategy focused on provision of HIV maternal testing and retesting, rapid initiation on antiretroviral therapy (ART) for cases identified and provision of prevention services for HIV negative clients, as well as enhanced tracking and testing of HIV exposed infants. These services were wrapped around a case manager model to track the women on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and ART for consistent use, and a testing schedule for HIV exposed children. Secondary data from past FY reports were analyzed

Results

From October 2018 to September 2019, 313 exposed babies were tested for HIV with 13 (4%) testing positive. From October 2019 to September 2020, 555 exposed babies were tested for HIV with 7 (1.2%) testing positive. From October 2020 to September 2021, 544 exposed babies were tested for HIV with 11 (2%) testing positive. From October 2021 to September 2022, 477 exposed babies were tested for HIV with none of the infants (0%) testing positive. Showcasing an infection rate of 4% in 2019 to a zero infection rate by 2022.

Conclusion

The results underscore the pivotal role of effective PMTCT outreach services, provided through health posts and non-conventional sites. Outreach service delivery models covering underserved communities are instrumental in positioning high HIV burden countries, like Zambia, on an efficient trajectory to achieve elimination of mother-to-child HIV transmission and ultimately attain HIV epidemic control by 2030.