Abstract 5: Retaining young women on oral Pre-exposure Prophylaxis in a youth-friendly clinic: mixed methods findings from a feasibility study in Khayelitsha, South Africa

Authors

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Background:

The South African Department of Health released national guidelines on the implementation of oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) which identified young women as a target group. Our ongoing study evaluates the feasibility of incorporating PrEP into sexual and reproductive health services delivered to women aged 18-25 years attending a youth-friendly clinic in Khayelitsha, a high-HIV prevalence area in South Africa.

Methods:

Women were recruited primarily through health talks, word of mouth and promotion materials in the clinic waiting area. Participation was not remunerated. After month 1 and 2 visits, PrEP is given two/three-monthly, depending on participants’ contraception methods. Qualitative interviews are being conducted with a purposive sample of participants who have been part of the study for at least two months.

Results:

Of 114 participants enrolled by 26 June 2018, 42% did not miss a visit or exit the study during their first six months. This increases to 62% among those who attended their month 1 visit (Figure 1). Of 58 participants who experienced side effects within the first 6 months, 67% had side effects in the first month of PrEP use. Good attendance is not strongly associated with measured baseline demographic or risk characteristics (Figure 2). This is supported by qualitative interviews among nine participants, which revealed high levels of self-motivation regardless of attendance.

Conclusion:

While longer-acting formulations of PrEP could result in increased retention, providing oral PrEP with additional support within the first month in a youth-friendly clinic allows a reasonable proportion of self-selecting young women to persist on PrEP.
Time to First Missed PrEP Study Visit or Exit

Full cohort  
N=114

If Month 1 Attended  
N=77

Proportion with Good Attendance* by Baseline Characteristics (95% CI)

- high risk perception (baseline)*
- potential HIV exposure (past 72hrs)*
- partner unknown HIV status (past 6mths)*
- sex without condom (past 6mths)*
- multiple partners (past 6mths)*
- STI at follow-up visit*
- Any STI Symptoms (baseline)*
- recruited by study staff*
- lived in area >3 years*
- tertiary qualification*

response
- yes
- no

* no missed visits or exit in first 6 months