Disclosure emerged a major barrier to HIVST distribution to male partners in a sample of pregnant Ugandan women living with HIV.

HIVST distribution to male partners may be more challenging for pregnant WLWH than for women not living with HIV.

BACKGROUND

- Provision of HIV self-test kits (HIVST) to pregnant women attending antenatal care (ANC) for distribution to male partners may increase partner HIV testing in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Research findings to date suggest this practice is generally acceptable to HIVST recipients.
- However, studies have not focused specifically on the experiences of women living with HIV (WLWH) who distribute HIVST.

METHODS

- OBUMU is a randomized trial examining the impact of providing HIVST and oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to male partners of pregnant Ugandan WLWH.
- Women are given HIVST during antenatal clinic visits to deliver to their male partners at home.
- Qualitative interviews have been completed with 20 women to date.
- Interviews explore experiences of HIVST delivery, along with other topics.
- Qualitative data on HIVST delivery experiences were inductively analyzed to characterize key aspects of the HIVST distribution process for WLWH.

RESULTS

- Women were apprehensive about disclosing their HIV status to their male partners, fearing disclosure would result in abandonment at a time when pregnancy left them feeling vulnerable and especially dependent on their partners' support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=20</th>
<th>N (%) or Median (IQR)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>28 (25-30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of Relationship (years)</td>
<td>3 (1.8-6.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosed at Enrollment</td>
<td>7 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known HIV status</td>
<td>4+ years 3 (15%) 1-4 years 7 (35%) &lt;1 year 10 (50%)</td>
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- Women experienced the prospect of delivering HIVST to their male partners as a dilemma. They welcomed a means of facilitating testing by their male partners, but were anxious to avoid questions about HIV they feared delivering the kit would raise.
- Women managed the dilemma in the following ways:
  - (a) They delivered HIVST but misrepresented its purpose;
  - (b) They avoided explanations by leaving the HIVST kit where it would be seen by their partners;
  - (c) They did not deliver the HIVST kit.

...The health worker told me to find some time when I am with my husband when we are on good terms and tell him about the self-testing kit. But I told her that I would tell my husband, "I was given this brush to pass through your gums to check for decayed teeth," because during that time my gums were paining. I was planning to give it to him, but I totally failed. Whenever he came home, I would fail to give it to him.

--Woman, Age 27

CONCLUSIONS

- Disclosure emerged as a major barrier to HIVST distribution to male partners in this qualitative sample of pregnant Ugandan WLWH.
- Counseling and support for disclosure to male partners as part of the HIVST distribution process may alleviate this barrier.
- HIVST distribution may be more challenging for WLWH than for women not living with HIV.

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