



‘Does Men’s Participation Necessary in the Prevention of Mother-to-Child HIV Transmission Care?’: Perceptions of Married Men and Barriers to Participation in Osogbo, Nigeria

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Introduction

The HIV/AIDS pandemic remains a major public health challenge in sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, only 28 percent of women and 39 percent of men know that the risk of an HIV-positive pregnant woman transmitting the HIV virus to her unborn child can be reduced by taking certain drugs during pregnancy (National Population Commission and ICF Macro 2009).



About 58 percent of pregnant women receive antenatal care (ANC; United Nations Children's Fund 2010) and the usage of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services has only reached 12 percent.

This study was therefore undertaken to explore married men perceptions of PMTCT services and barriers to their involvement.

Methodology

- **Study Design**

This study was a descriptive qualitative that utilized Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

- **Study Population**

Men aged 20 years and above with inclusion criteria of being married or having a female partner within the 18–45-year age group regardless of whether their wives had been involved in PMTCT services or not and resided within the catchment area of Ladoke Akintola University Teaching Hospital, Osogbo were purposively selected for FGDs.

- **Study Sample**

A total of eighty participants were selected by convenience sampling from both Osogbo and Igbona local government areas in Osogbo town and used for this study. Five FGDs each were conducted in both LGAs to make a total of ten focus group discussions sessions.

- **Data collection and analysis**

Data were collected between March-May, 2011 and the discussions were conducted using FGD guide with open-ended questions. The focus group discussions were moderated by the one of the researchers. The discussions were conducted in a quiet space to avoid noise interference and interruptions and each session lasted about 40-69 minutes.



The discussions were audio-taped with the consent of the participants. The collected data were manually analysed using content analysis technique. This included multiple overall surface readings of transcripts to capture context and meaning, followed by coding and categorization of recurring concepts/ideas.

Demographic data were analysed using SPSS 15.0 software to generate frequency tables.

Findings

- **Demographic Characteristics**

A total of eighty people participated in the FGDs with mean age of 33.9 ± 5.9 years. Many were in the age group 28–35 (42.5%), 35.8% had Ordinary National Diploma (OND)/National Certificate of Education (NCE) and 12.8% had Higher National Diploma (HND)/First degree.

Many (74.8%) of the participants were Muslims and 98.8% were of Yoruba tribe. Majority (97.5%) of respondents were currently married while 2.5% were Cohabiting. Only (3.2%) of study participants had no children

Awareness of Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission Services

Many of the participants were aware of PMTCT services. Participants were of the opinion that it was important for couples to get tested together with the intention of protecting their unborn child from the HIV infection.

Sources of information among participants were radio, television, health workers and newspapers.

Male involvement in PMTCT

Majority of the participants have never accompanied their wives to ANC and reasons were not having time due to work, the perception that the man will be perceived as a woman wrapper among his peers.

Many of the participants agreed that it is necessary and important for them to be involved in PMTCT services because accompanying their wife would help the man learn and increase their knowledge of ANC activities, this would show true love and keep the woman happy, this would encourage and support the woman during the stress and discomfort of pregnancy and help both to know their health status.

Barriers to Male Involvement

The barriers identified among participants were societal norms, lack of PMTCT knowledge and most importantly fear of HIV positive results. Lack of finance was also mentioned as reason for husbands not to support their wives.

Discussion

Many of the participants were in support about involving in PMTCT services and thought this involvement was appropriate. Yet, putting this supportive attitude into practice remains difficult for many men, because of traditional gender roles and perceived community norms. This corroborates with the finding by Godlove, Dorothy, Pius and Joseph in 2010 where many of the men were supportive about accompanying their wife to ANC and thought this behavior was acceptable.

Recommendation

Community sensitization programmes such as health education aimed at breaking cultural barriers should be instituted by government and non-governmental agencies.