



## Repeat pregnancies among women with known HIV-positive status in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe

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### BACKGROUND

- Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention Project - University of Zimbabwe (ZAPP-UZ) is a collaborative research organisation that supports the national PMTCT programme in Chitungwiza.
- Chitungwiza is an urban settlement 32 kilometres south of Harare, Zimbabwe, with a population of 1.5 million people served by four municipal clinics, one government central hospital, and three private hospitals.
- With funding from the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), ZAPP-UZ has been supporting PMTCT services (including community mobilization) in Chitungwiza since inception of the PMTCT programme in 1999.
- Data from the Chitungwiza urban PMTCT programme have shown an increase in the number of known HIV-positive pregnant women enrolling in antenatal care (ANC).
- Of the 1376 pregnant women who tested HIV-positive at first ANC booking in 2008, 116 (8.4%) reported already knowing their HIV-positive status.
- In 2009, 79 (11.1%) of the 712 pregnant women testing HIV-positive at first ANC booking reported already knowing their status.
- Women already knowing their status reported receiving information on PMTCT and family planning (FP) during a previous pregnancy; however, it is not known whether the current pregnancies were planned or unplanned.

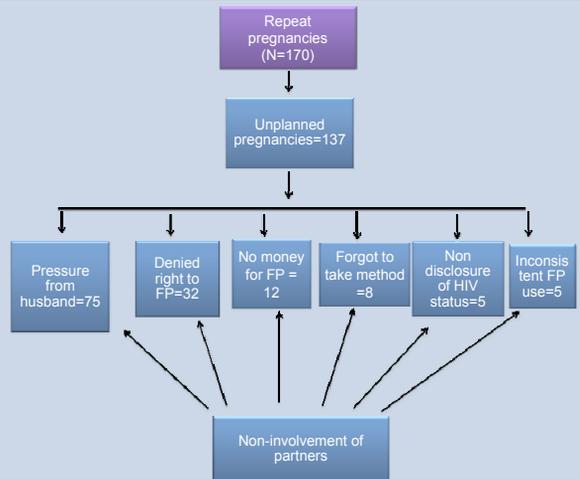


### METHODS

- A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in Chitungwiza from April-September 2010 to examine repeat pregnancies among women with known HIV status.
- Multigravida women (i.e., having at least one previous pregnancy) enrolled in the PMTCT programme with known HIV-positive status (n=170) were interviewed using an interviewer-administered questionnaire.
- Three focus group discussions of 10-15 women each were conducted.
- Quantitative data were analysed using EpiInfo Version 3.3; qualitative data were analysed by thematic area.

### RESULTS

- Of the 170 respondents, 137 (80.6%) reported experiencing at least one unplanned repeat pregnancy.
- Of the women who reported having unplanned repeat pregnancies:
  - 89 (65.0%) had not disclosed their HIV status to their partner
  - 109 (79.6%) had attended family planning (FP) counselling sessions alone after testing HIV-positive
- Reported reasons for unplanned repeat pregnancies included (out of the 137 women who reported this experience):
  - 75 (54.7%) reported their pregnancy was due to pressure from their partner
  - 76 (55.5%) respondents had been prescribed the pill and of those, 32 (42.1%) reported being denied the right to use a hormonal contraceptive by partners or health workers
  - 12 (8.8%) could not afford an FP method
  - 8 (5.8%) forgot to take the pill
  - 5 (3.6%) reported inconsistent use of an FP method
  - 5 (3.6%) had not disclosed their HIV status
- At the time of the study, FP methods available at the study clinics included pills, injectables and male and female condoms



### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- HIV-positive women included in this study faced challenges in controlling their fertility.
- Women reported experiencing repeat unplanned pregnancies for a number of reasons both within and outside of their control.
- Interventions are needed to support and empower HIV-positive women to decide if and when to become pregnant.
- Efforts to increase husband/partner involvement are needed to improve uptake of and adherence to FP methods.
- Chitungwiza municipality should waive fees for contraceptives and make long-acting and permanent FP methods accessible and affordable.

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