Identifying MSM and Transgender Women Who Have Poor Linkage to HIV Care in Lima, Peru

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Conflict of Interest Disclosure
Angela Primbas, BA

I have no conflicts to disclose.

HIV in South America

- Overall prevalence of HIV is relatively low

- A growing problem – especially among MSM and Transgender Women
  - Only **51% of MSM** have access to HIV services
  - HIV prevalence among **Transgender Women** is **49 times higher** than the general population

HIV in Peru

Progress in access to HIV care

TRATAMIENTO ANTIRETROVIRAL
DE GRAN ACTIVIDAD "TARGA"
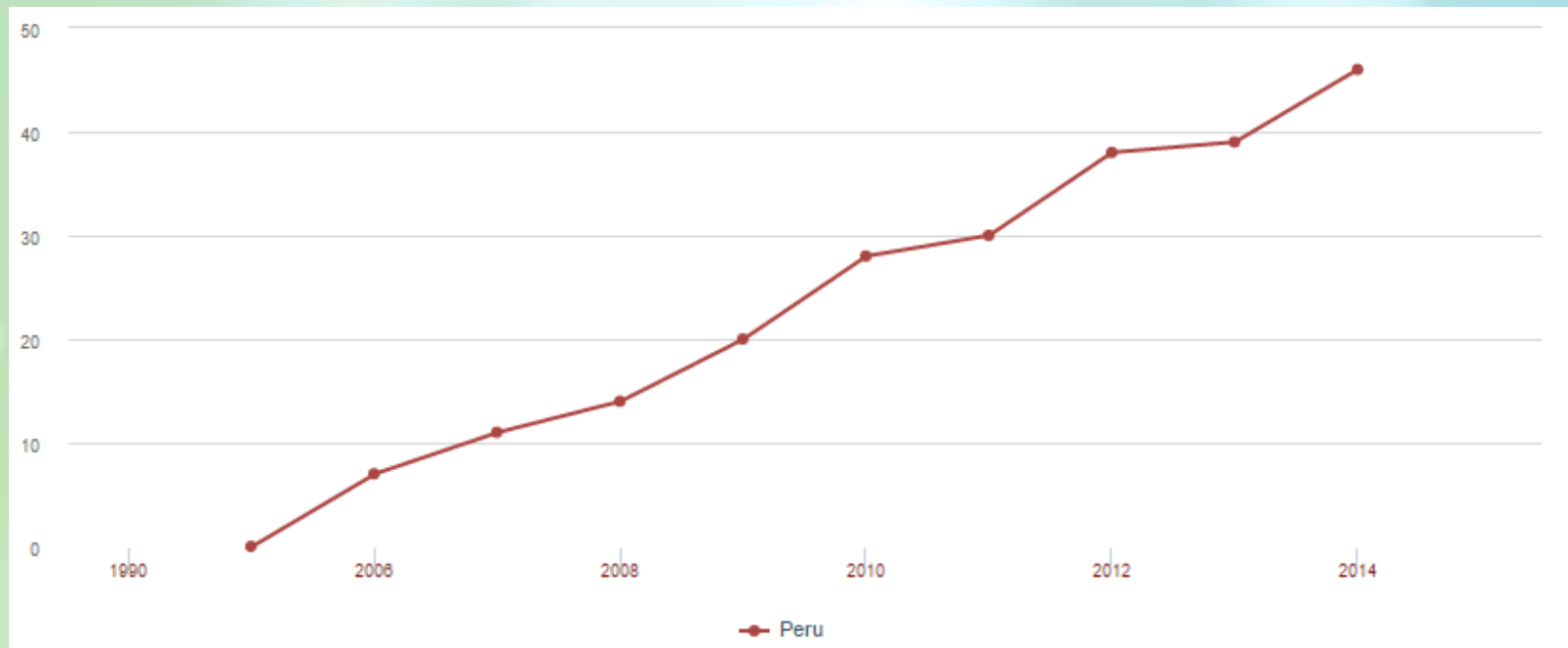VOLUNTARIO, CONFIDENCIAL
GRATUITO Y ESTÁ A TU ALCANCE

TARGA — free or low-cost ART
at all public hospitals

HIV in Peru

Percent of people living with HIV who are receiving ART

Access to ART has been growing in Peru but only **46%** of HIV+ people are currently receiving treatment

Some important questions

- Are people accessing care?

- Who are the people linking to care after receiving a HIV+ diagnosis?

The Literature

- Few studies on linkage to care in Latin America
- Important factors in other parts of the world
  - Income
  - Education
  - Age
  - Substance Use

Data: SABES and TARGA

- Participants were identified as HIV + as part of the ¿SABES? study, which included a baseline questionnaire
- HIV + participants identified in TARGA database
- Certain groups were excluded
  - Military
  - Diagnosis prior to screening

Establishing Linkage to Care

- **TARGA** database searched for HIV+ participants identified in the SABES study

  – For newly diagnosed participants, linkage to care defined by a visit to a TARGA HIV clinic within **90 days** after receiving a positive diagnosis in SABES study screening
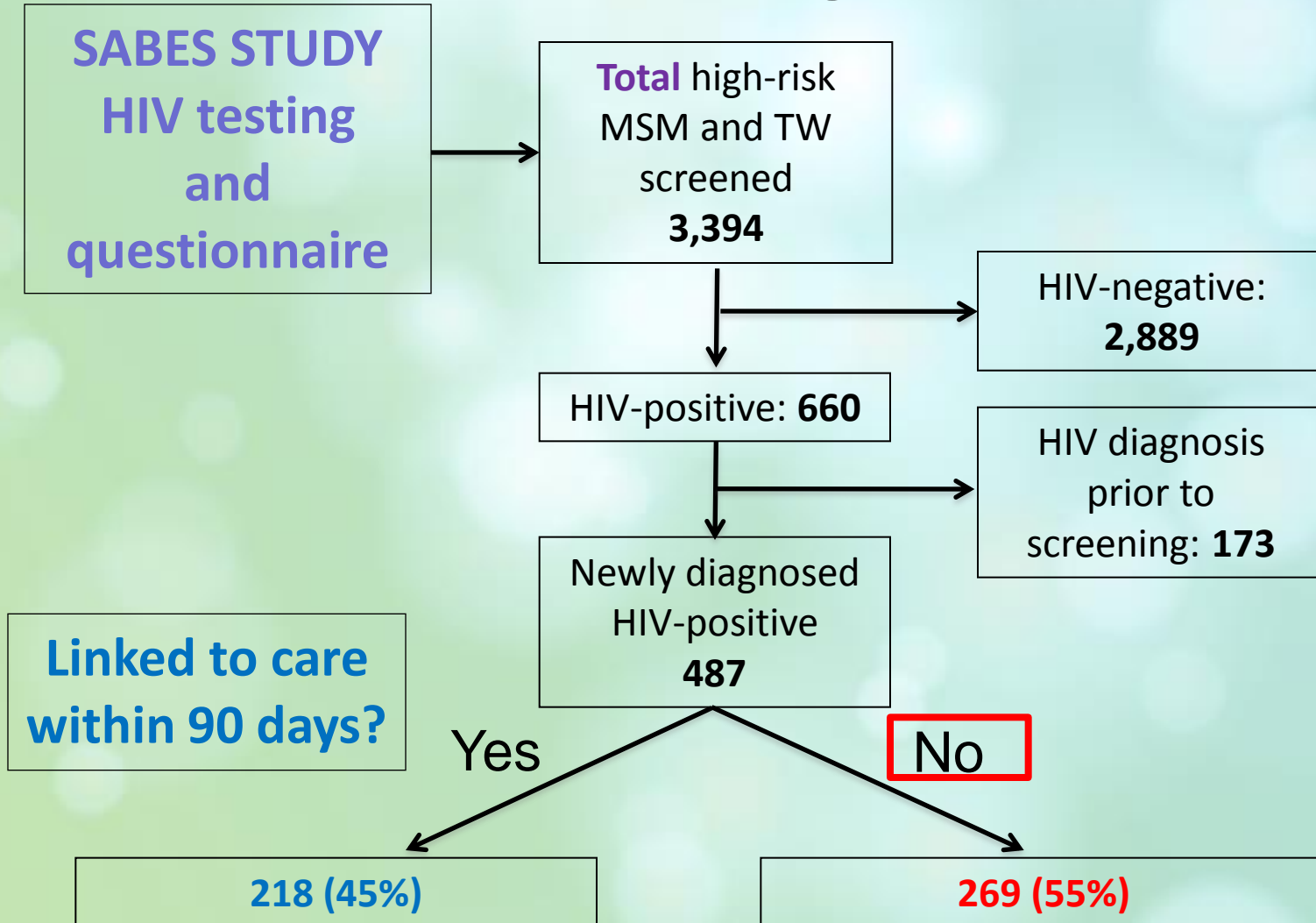
Methods

- **<u>Defining linkage to care</u>**
  - **Dichotomous outcome**
    - Linkage to care within 90 days
  - Survival analysis
    - Using dates of HIV test and first HIV clinic visit

- **<u>Defining factors associated with linkage</u>**
  - Univariate Analyses
  - **Multivariate Analyses**
  - Survival Analysis

Results: Screening and Linkage

SABES STUDY HIV testing and questionnaire

Total high-risk MSM and TW screened
3,394

HIV-negative: **2,889**

HIV-positive: **660**

HIV diagnosis prior to screening: **173**

Newly diagnosed HIV-positive **487**

Linked to care within 90 days?

Yes

No

218 (45%)

269 (55%)

Who are the 55% that did not link?

The Questionnaire

- **Demographics**
  - Age
  - Education
  - Income
  - Gender ID
  - Sexual ID

- **History of Sex Work**

- **Previous STIs**

- **Perceptions of Stigma**

- **Coping Styles**

- **Alcohol & Drug Use**

Factors **NOT** associated with linkage

- Monthly income
- Education level
- Perceptions of stigma against persons with HIV
- Coping styles and mechanisms

Factors and identities associated with **poor** linkage in multivariate analysis

- Bisexual Identity (OR=0.57, p=0.022)
- Sex Workers (OR=0.48, p=0.002)
- Alcohol Use Disorder (OR=0.63, p=0.025)
- Transgender Women (OR=0.62, p=0.12)

Factors and identities associated with **better** linkage to care

- Older age ≥ 25 years   (OR=1.9, p=0.003)

Remaining Questions

- Distance to clinic
  - Currently analyzing geospatial data

- Perceptions of stigma associated with gender/sexual and sex worker identities
  - Focus groups

Next Steps to Improve Linkage

- Interventions addressing **alcohol use**

- Targeted outreach –**vulnerable populations** **(transgender individuals, bisexual individuals, sex workers, youth)**

Thank you!

Acknowledgements

- Ann Duerr

- Manuel Villaran

- Javier Lama

- Fred Hutch Cancer Research Center

- Impacta Peru

- University of Washington School of Medicine