

CONTROLLING THE HIV EPIDEMIC WITH
ANTIRETROVIRALS



Avoiding the Cost
of Inaction

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HIV Perinatally Infected Young Adults *Welcome PrEP and Envision its Potential in Curtailing the Epidemic*

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No relationships or conflict of interest to disclose.



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Background

- Perinatally HIV infected (pHIV-I) young adults face the complexity of living with a transmissible disease and the challenges of ART adherence (e.g. Arrivillaga, Martucci, Hoyos, & Arango, 2013; Brown, & Lourie, 2000; Fernet et al., 2007; Leonard & Ellen, 2008)
- There is paucity in studies that explore the negotiation of sexuality among this population.
- The advent of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) can redefine their path to sexually active adults.



Methods

- ❑ In-depth interviews were conducted to twenty perinatally HIV infected women and men between the ages of 18 to 30 in Puerto Rico.
- ❑ Their experiences as young persons living with HIV were explored. Questions about medication meaning, intimate relationships, and knowledge and acceptability of PrEP, were asked.
- ❑ The interviews were audio-recorded. NVIVO was used for the analysis. Responses were assessed using the *Qualitative-Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis* Framework (Smith, Flower, & Larkin, 2009)



Demographics

n=20

- 8 Female, 12 Male
- 11 under 21 years of age
- 18 had completed high school
- 11 had some college education
- 3 were married or lived with a permanent partner
- 9 were unemployed
- 10 were students



Results

- The participants expressed their stress about transmitting HIV. They reported feeling responsible for the wellbeing of their partners.
- When asked about PrEP, the majority of them didn't know what it was. After a brief explanation, they were excited about the potential of the medication and embraced its adoption as part of their intimacy strategies.



Pedro, 19 years old

“Good...it is a good method because it takes off a heavy burden... to us men, or to any [HIV] infected or to any positive... It takes away a BIG burden.

You don't know how many times I have been worried about that. In my girlfriend's case, I would like to give it to her, expose her to the medication... As I told you, it would take away a BIG burden.”



Results

- They felt relieved to know that their partners could have a tool to prevent infection.
- They envisioned adopting PrEP as a double protection, as an alternative to give control to partners, and as a way to curtail the epidemic.



Fernanda, 29 years old

“Magnificent! I hope it comes to light soon so that my husband can use it. How cool would it be! It would be magnificent because, maybe, the transmission will stop. There is too much transmission. People know but they still get infected.”



Results

- They wanted to know more about the side effects and efficacy.
- Based on the advent of PrEP, some welcomed the possibility of receiving additional education and counseling as couples.



Marina, 23 years old

“Ahh! I didn’t know, at all ... I didn’t know that ...but I know now, obviously that’s why I say get informed together, because I am also old and I don’t find out about the new things.”



Concluding Remarks

- PHIV-I youth is a population that can highly benefit from PrEP, however they are unaware of its existence.
- If pHIV-I youth are well educated about the PrEP, they can share that information with their intimate partners, facilitating their intimacy and sharing the responsibility of preventing transmission.
- Health services targeted to this population should incorporate latest information about PrEP.



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