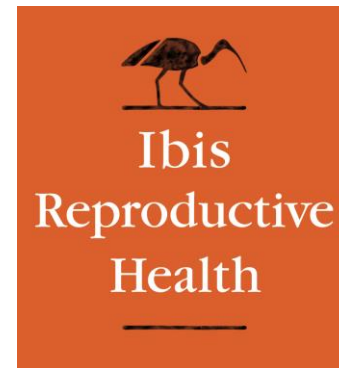
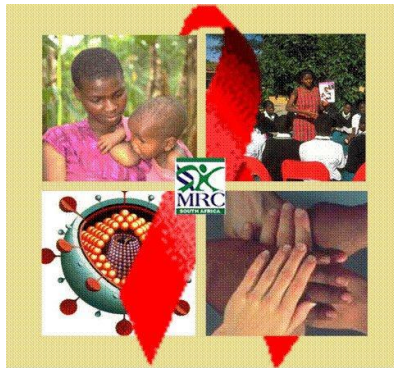


Anticipated Experiences of and Barriers to Enrolling in HIV Care: Are there Gender Differences among Newly-Diagnosed South Africans?

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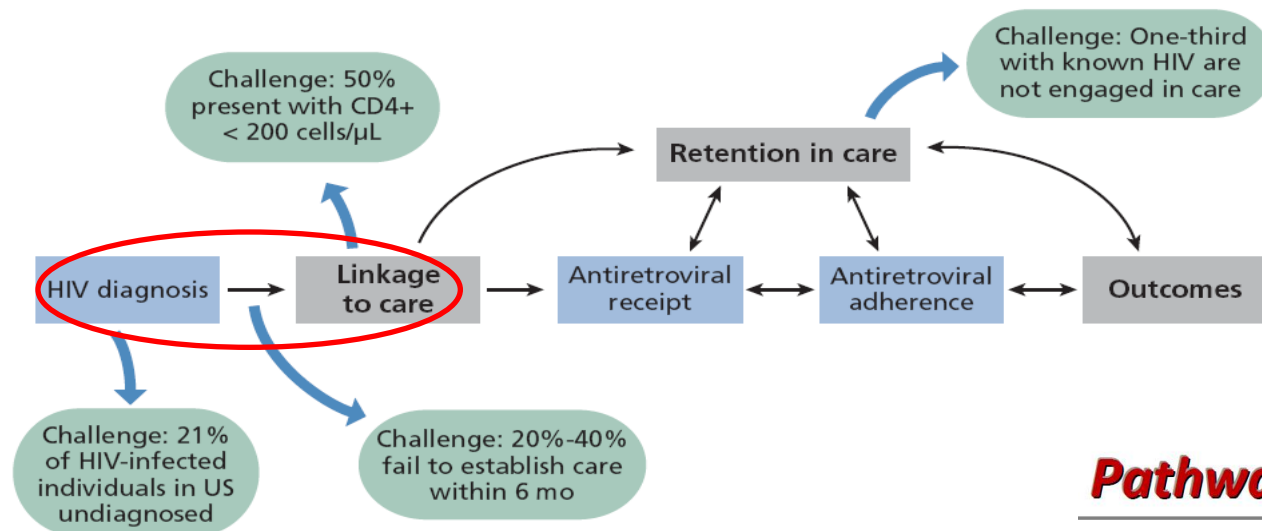
Pathways to



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Background: Linkage to Care

- Linkage to care after HIV diagnosis is recognized as an urgent priority to increase timely ART initiation
- Little is known about factors associated with linkage
 - In settings where social-structural challenges -- e.g., stigma, poverty, resource-limited health systems – are great



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Background: Gender Differences

- Men are much less likely than women to present for HIV testing
- Once men and women are tested, little is known about gender differences in perceived barriers to care-seeking



Study Questions

1. Are there differences in the testing histories of women and men and reasons why they test?
2. Prior to testing, what experiences – positive and negative – do women and men anticipate if they test HIV+ & return to the clinic to get CD4+ results?
3. After their HIV+ diagnosis, what barriers to returning to the clinic do women and men anticipate?
4. Are there gender differences in anticipated experiences or perceived barriers?



Pathways to Engagement in HIV Care

Prospective cohort study following women and men from before HIV testing to 8 months after diagnosis; Primary outcome = return for CD4+ test results

2762 – Prior to Testing Interviews –
Women and men testing at 3 public-sector primary healthcare clinics, Durban, South Africa, November 2010-May 2012

926 – After Testing Interviews --
Same day, newly-diagnosed HIV+ or scored high on a Distress scale

793 - HIV+ people invited to join the prospective cohort

463 - Returned for a Baseline Interview within 1 month

> 93% Retention at 4 and/or 8 month follow-up interviews



Pathways to Engagement in HIV Care

Participants

**Focus of this report: 424 HIV+ cohort participants
(281 women, 143 men)
Testing Characteristics & Care-Seeking Perceptions**

Pathways to Engagement in HIV Care

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Measures

PRIOR TO TESTING

- **Testing Characteristics** – Testing history, Reason for Testing, Suspected HIV, Symptomatic?
- **Expectations if HIV+ & Return to Clinic – 9 items**, e.g., *“Someone will see you and find out you have HIV”*

AFTER TESTING

- **Perceived Barriers to Returning to the Clinic, 10 items**, e.g., *“The times or days the clinic is open are not convenient for you.”*
- * Measures developed via 24 elicitation interviews with people presenting for HIV testing or enrolled in care



Characteristics of the Population

	Women N = 281	Men N = 143	
Age (mean, SD)	29.9 (6.3)	31.5 (9.4)	.05
Primary Source of Income (%)			
Employment	23.1%	42.5%	
Partner/ spouse	5.0	2.8	
Other family / relatives	28.5	27.3	
Government grant	34.9	8.4	
Other	8.4	17.5	<.01
Takes care of dependents (%)			
No	26.8%	38.5%	
Yes, children only	52.6	19.6	
Yes, both children and adults	18.5	42.0	<.01
People in household go without food (%)			
Often	15.7%	9.1%	
Sometimes	20.3	25.9	
Seldom	8.5	14.7	
Never	55.5	50.3	.04
Travel time to clinic			
Less than ½ hour	44.9%	47.6%	
½ hour to 1 hour	49.1%	49.7%	
More than 1 hour	3.8%	2.7%	.82

Testing Characteristics

	Women N = 281	Men N = 143	
Number of prior tests (%)			
None	52.1%	80.4%	
One	23.6	13.3	
More than one	24.3	6.3	<.001
Suspects HIV+ (%)			
Yes	45.9%	43.4%	
Unsure	15.3	16.1	
No	38.8	40.6	.88
Reason suspects HIV+ (if yes or unsure) (%)			
Has illness or symptoms	32.9%	35.3%	
Knows/suspects partner is HIV+	7.6	9.4	
Knows/suspects partner has other ptnrs	13.5	3.5	
No condom use	23.5	29.4	
Other	22.4%	22.4	.16
Number of symptoms			
None	54.1%	51.0%	
One	22.4	15.4	
More than one	23.5	33.6	<.05

Positive Expectations If Return to Clinic

NO DIFFERENCES BY GENDER

N = 424

Do you think this will happen if you return to the clinic in ~ 2 weeks to get your CD4+ results?	% Yes or Possibly	% No
You will be more able to accept your HIV+ status	97.7	2.4
You will be on your way to getting care that will help you feel better	95.3	4.7
The clinic staff will teach you how to stay healthy and strong	95.3	4.7
You will feel respected by the staff at the clinic	87.9	12.1

Negative Expectations If Return to Clinic

NO DIFFERENCES BY GENDER

N = 424

Do you think this will happen if you return to the clinic in ~ 2 weeks to get your CD4+ results?	% Yes or Possibly	% No
Someone you know will see you at the clinic and find out you have HIV	56.5	43.5
You will have to wait too long at the clinic before being seen	55.0	44.0
The clinic staff will gossip about you in the community	32.8	67.2
The staff at the clinic will treat you badly because you are HIV+	19.2	80.8
You won't learn anything at the clinic that will help you	17.9	82.0

Perceived Barriers

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Is this a reason you might delay returning to the clinic longer than 2 weeks? (% Yes or Possibly)	Women N = 281	Men N = 143	χ^2 P
You do not have money for transport	41.9	31.7	.04
You do not have someone to take care of a child or adult at home	24.2	9.2	<.001
The clinic is too far away from where you stay	23.3	17.6	.18
Difficult for you to take time away from work	22.0	22.6	.90
The times or days that the clinic is open are not convenient for you	20.1	10.7	.02
You don't really feel sick so it would be okay to wait awhile before returning	20.1	9.2	.004
You might feel too sick to come to the clinic	15.8	9.2	.06
Your partner would not want you to come to the clinic	15.0	10.1	.17
You would wonder if you really have HIV so you would wait awhile to find out.	15.1	8.5	.05
You prefer to go to a traditional healer instead	12.2	8.5	.25
Any barrier	58.9	49.3	.06

Summary

- Men are less likely than women to have had an HIV test prior to this HIV+ test
- Positive expectations – No gender differences: Over 90% anticipated health benefits if they returned to clinic
- Negative expectations – No gender differences: A substantial % expected
 - Will be identified by someone they know
 - Will have to wait too long to be seen at the clinic
 - Clinic staff will gossip about me in the community
- Women were more likely to cite facing barriers related to
 - Needing to care for someone at home
 - Not having money for transport
 - Inconvenient clinic days or hours
 - Wondering if they really were HIV+



Conclusions/Future Directions

- Gender differences & similarities in the experience of being diagnosed HIV+ and getting enrolled in care: Women and men have similar expectations about returning for care, but women report more barriers
- Which, if any, expectations and barriers are related to linkage to care? -- future analyses
- Insight into reasons for delay at all steps: Even among those who decide to test, challenges related to poverty, stigma, and the health care system loom large for S. African women and men
- Findings related to how people feel about the clinic and staff suggest the need to consider clinic-based interventions



Pathways to



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