Socio-Contextual Influences on Time to Viral Suppression (VS) in the Deep South: A Qualitative Analysis


1University of Alabama at Birmingham College of Arts & Sciences, 2Portland, Oregon Government, 3Birmingham AIDS Outreach, 4University of Alabama at Birmingham Heersink School of Medicine, 5University of Alabama at Birmingham Ryals School of Public Health, 6University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Nursing, 7Louisiana Department of Health, 8Mississippi State Department of Health, 9Alabama Department of Public Health, 10Tulane University School of Social Work

Continuum 2024 • June 9-11, 2024 • Puerto Rico
The authors have no conflicts of interest to disclose.
• Characterize geographic variability in time to viral suppression (VS) quantitatively, qualitatively, & geospatially

• Develop rapid ART intervention program that hastens VS when delivered in underserved areas of greatest need
Qualitative Methods

• In-depth interviews (IDI) to gauge experiences & perceptions of time to VS, lasting up to 90 minutes
• Adult English-speaking PWH residing in AL, LA, MS
• $50 incentive
• Human subjects protection approved by UAB IRB
• Inductive coding
Qualitative Results

- Participant Demographics
  - 75% Male
  - 75% Black
  - 80% 50+ years old
  - 65% 16+ years since diagnosis
  - Geographically diverse
Qualitative Results: Perceived Influences on Time to VS

- **Facilitators**
  - Comprehensive HIV care
  - HIV an important health concern

- **Barriers**
  - Stigma
  - Lack of HIV education/communication
  - Health disparities associated with race & age
Qualitative Results: Perceived Influences on Time to VS

- Facilitators
  - Medicaid expansion in LA
  - Food Stamps
  - Ryan White Program

- Barriers
  - HIV criminalization laws
Qualitative Results: Perceived Influences on Time to VS

- **Facilitators**
  - Support groups for PWH
  - Social cohesion

- **Barriers**
  - Affordable housing shortage
  - Religious & political conservatism
  - Lack of HIV education in schools
  - Limited public transportation
  - Limited employment opportunities
Qualitative Results: Perceived Influences on Time to VS

- **Facilitators**
  - Social media as a way to extend social network

- **Barriers**
  - Experienced & anticipated stigma from community
  - Experienced & anticipated stigma from family & friends
Qualitative Results: Perceived Influences on Time to VS

- **Facilitators**
  - High self-efficacy
  - Religion/Faith
  - Protective/Proactive behavior

- **Barriers**
  - Unmet basic needs
  - Depression/substance use
  - Cognitive health/memory

**Modified Socioecological Model**

- HIV Epidemic Stage
  - Prevalent transmission of HIV in the population
- Public Policy
  - Content and implementation of policies promote or decrease ability to decrease HIV risk
- Community
  - Determines the access to safe and competent prevention, treatment, and care services
  - Can promote health and well-being or reinforce stigma and discrimination
- Social and sexual networks
  - Group of people who are predisposed to risk based on sexual or parental exposure
  - Family and social networks can provide social support or reinforce protective social norms
- Individual-Level
  - Biological or behavioral factors associated with acquisition or transmission risks

**Level of Risks**
- Stage of Epidemic
- Public Policy
- Community
- Network
- Individual
PWH acknowledge barriers and facilitators to achieving VS at all stages of the Modified Socioecological model.

While many reported influences on to time to VS can exist anywhere, others may be unique to the Deep South.

Considering these multi-level influences on time to VS provide greater context to geographic variability in time to VS and is necessary to design effective & sustainable interventions.
Acknowledgements & Contact Information

• This study is funded by NIH/NIAID (R01AI253690, MPI: Rana & Batey).
• We wish to thank the following:
  • Health Department partners in AL, LA, & MS
  • UAB Center for AIDS Research
  • Sonia Williams for assistance with the presentation
• For more information, contact: yoolee@uab.edu