

## Study of Awareness and Usage of Contraceptives among HIV Positive Women in Delhi

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### Motivation

According to UNAIDS it is estimated that 38% of adults living with HIV/AIDS are women. The increasing prevalence of HIV among women can consequently be seen in the form of increased mother to child transmission of HIV and nearly five percent of infections are attributed to it. Preventing unintended pregnancy among HIV-positive women constitutes a critical and cost-effective approach to primary prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and is a global public health priority for addressing the desperate state of maternal and child health in HIV hyper-endemic settings. However, very little is known about the knowledge, attitude and practices about contraceptive usage in HIV couples. There is also a need to know about the factors influencing the choice of contraceptive measures and the level of awareness of mother to child transmission of HIV and its prevention which explains the rationale behind the work.

### Methods

#### *Type of Study*

Cross sectional study carried out in the Gynecology OPD, LNJP Hospital in New Delhi with due institutional ethical clearance. No of Subjects: 80 HIV positive women in reproductive age group of 15 to 49 years who were sexually active and willing to participate in the study were recruited. Study tool: A pre-tested pre-designed interview schedule was used to collect information on socio-demographic profile, stage of disease, knowledge, attitude and practices of contraceptives and current known status of HIV of her children. Data was analyzed using Epi-info 2005 software of World Health Organization and results were presented in proportions and any difference between two proportions in relation to particular factor were assessed by chi-square or fisher exact test.

### Results

The subjects who participated in the study represent the major socio- economic strata of the country as it is an important factor influencing their knowledge and attitude towards this sensitive issue. The partners of

83.75% ie.67 women were found to be HIV positive while the rest are HIV negative which indicates a very high heterosexual transmission rate. But as a result of comparatively higher contraceptive use ie.72.5%, the rate of mother to child transmission which used to be one of the major routes of transmission of HIV has decreased. 96.25% women are aware and 3.75% unaware about the availability and need to use various methods of contraception. Majority of women, irrespective of their occupation ie.60.34% were found to be using barrier method mostly due to the convenience of its usage and also due to its easy availability. Also regularity of use of barrier method is significantly higher than other methods. Occupation does not seem to have a very significant impact on the choice of contraception in terms of barrier and non barrier methods. There is a significant difference in the awareness about contraceptives among women who are aware of mother to child transmission (MTCT) of HIV from those who are not aware about the same. 76.25% were found to be aware of the possibility of mother to child transmission of HIV which is the most important factor leading to an increased prevalence of contraceptive use of 75.32%. But there is a lack of awareness about the importance of regularity of usage for success of contraception. Hence the issue of awareness about MTCT of HIV is of utmost importance as far as an effort to reduce the number of pediatric cases of HIV is concerned.

#### *Implications*

All the subjects who participated in the study are receiving Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) but only 48.05% of them were found to be using some method of contraception, predominantly a barrier method regularly. It validates the need to approach the concepts of ART, Family Planning and Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) together. The role of contraception in reducing the pediatric burden of HIV is paramount and this study highlights the need for increased awareness and usage of contraceptives by HIV positive couples. There is a need to provide an effective counseling to the patients on this issue. The experimental design of a cross sectional approach used in this study was adequate to achieve the aforesaid objectives but there is a scope to improvise on the information which can be collected with a longer duration of the study as the influence of counseling on the awareness and contraceptive usage among women can be observed.