

TITLE	HIV Status and Achieving Fertility Desires
DURATION	May 1 st , 2008 through April 30 th , 2013
SUPPORTED BY	National Institutes of Health
GOAL	To help individuals and couples in African Countries facing generalized HIV epidemics to achieve their family size goals while avoiding or coping with HIV infection

In regions with a generalized HIV epidemic like Sub-Saharan Africa, sexually active individuals of reproductive age are often faced with conflicting sexual and reproductive health needs as they seek to prevent or live with HIV and, at the same time, aspire to achieve their fertility goals. Program planners and providers who offer sexual and reproductive health services face difficult questions in how to meet the needs of women and men with these duals goals. How does HIV status influence sexual and reproductive behaviors, and family planning goals? How do key HIV and AIDS-related services like HIV testing, anti-retroviral(ART) treatments and services for the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, influence fertility desires and affect behaviors related to achieving or preventing pregnancy and preventing HIV infection? What is the impact of pregnancy and childbirth on the progress of HIV infection? Answers to these and other questions will be useful to health care planners and providers, helping them to better understand and more effectively meet the sexual and reproductive health care needs of HIV positive and negative women and men.

Project Approach

Guttmacher proposes to undertake new research that will improve provision of sexual and reproductive health services, including HIV-related and pregnancy-related care. We will use analytical approaches and behavioral social science research to examine the interrelationships between HIV status and fertility desires, to increase understanding of the efforts women and men are making to achieve their fertility desires while preventing HIV infection or transmission, and to improve the understanding or the potential impact of recent efforts to routinize and expand HIV testing among individuals of childbearing age. The study will also examine two unexplored issues in HIV research. First, the social stigma attached to being HIV-positive and its effects on sexual and reproductive behavior and fertility intention; and second, the topic of attitudes and behavior regarding abortion in high HIV prevalence settings.

Major Activities

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Three research activities will be undertaken:

- *Secondary data analysis of Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)*

We will analyze existing nationally representative individual and facility-level data from 14 Sub-Saharan countries that recently fielded surveys that included biomarker HIV testing to provide a regional overview of the interrelationships between HIV status and fertility desires and sexual and reproductive behaviors.

- *Data collection and analysis of community-based surveys*

We will conduct community-based surveys with individuals of reproductive age and HIV+ respondents in one country with moderate HIV prevalence (Nigeria) and one high-prevalence country (Zambia). The surveys will be followed with semi-structured, in-depth interviews with selected respondents from these surveys. The goal of this phase is to provide deeper understanding of relationship between HIV status and attitudes regarding HIV-testing and services and the actions women and men are taking to achieve their fertility aspirations and prevent or cope with HIV infection.

- *Data collection and analysis of health provider surveys*

We will conduct semi-structured interviews with a relevant range of sexual and reproductive health care providers in the two focus countries (Nigeria and Zambia). The aim of this component is to improve understanding of the roles of providers in helping men and women meet their fertility aspirations and avoid or cope with HIV infection, with special attention to recent efforts to routinize and expand HIV testing.

The Partners

Guttmacher Institute is working with partners in both countries to achieve the project objectives. In Nigeria, the Institute is partnering with Professor Isaac Adewole and his colleagues in the Department of OB/GYN, College of medicine, University of Ibadan. In Zambia the project partner is Dr. Kumbutso Dzekedzeke, a consultant affiliation with the African Population and Health Research in Nairobi, Kenya. Dr. Naomi Rutenberg of the Population Council in New York is a consultant to the project.

Publications

Guttmacher and its partners will disseminate project findings in a series of peer-reviewed articles, starting with the results from the analysis of the DHS data in the second year of the project. In addition to journal articles, we will publish short summary 'factsheets' and also present findings from the project at conferences and seminars.

Contact Us

For more information on this project:

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