
Michele Lanham1, Kayla Stankev1,2, Kathleen Ridgeway1, Maryline Mireku1, Dafinite Nhamo1, Diaphna Pilly2, Mercy Munire3, Jordan Kyengo1, Nicole Makahamadze1, Subarna Pradhan1, Megan Lydon1, Lisa Digolot1, Patricia Jekobna1, Patience Shamu1, Taurai Bhatisara1, Getrude Ncube1, Joseph Murungu1, Wanjuru Mukoma1, Saiga Mullick4

1 FHI 360, Durham, USA. 2 UCT Health, Nairobi, Kenya. 3 Zimbabwe Pangaas AIDS Trust, Harare, Zimbabwe. 4 Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa. 5 Zimbabwe Ministry of Health and Child Care, Harare, Zimbabwe

METHODS

We surveyed providers in Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe who worked at public, private, and non-governmental health facilities, including facilities offering oral PrEP during the study period and facilities that were likely to offer PrEP in the future. Follow-up qualitative in-depth interviews (IDIs) with select survey participants were conducted to better understand key survey results. Survey data were descriptively analyzed in STATA 13. IDI data were coded and thematically analyzed in NVivo 12.

RESULTS

Table 1. PrEP rollout strategy by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Target preparation &amp; type of facilities where PrEP is available</th>
<th>PrEP by age group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>2017–2018 rollout</td>
<td>Male health workers, people who use drugs, AG, men who have sex with men, and female sex workers</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2016–2018 rollout</td>
<td>Sex workers who use drugs, AG, men who have sex with men, and female sex workers</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>2018–2019 rollout</td>
<td>Sex workers who use drugs, AG, men who have sex with men, and female sex workers</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BACKGROUND

Oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a promising new HIV prevention option that is offered to populations at substantial HIV risk in Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, including adolescent girls (AG) ages 15-17 and young women (YW) ages 18-24. These countries differ in their strategy and scope of PrEP rollout (see Table 1). To inform provider training and PrEP service delivery, we conducted mixed methods implementation research with healthcare providers in 2017-2018 to examine providers’ attitudes and experiences delivering PrEP to AGYW.

Adherence and retention

More survey participants (76%) believed YW were responsible enough to take PrEP consistently compared to AG (48%) (see Figure 1). IDI participants provided PrEP experience confirmed that adherence and retention have been challenging, particularly for AG, because of clients’ lack of PrEP knowledge, daily pill burden, lack of disclosure and support, and association of PrEP with HIV treatment. IDI participants also said that delivering services to YW is generally easier because they are “more mature” while some AG “don’t listen.”

“…I think they [young women] are more focused. They know their problems, they know their risk and they are determined.”

– Female nurse with PrEP experience, age 52, Zimbabwe

Disclosing to parents and partners

In the survey, 34% thought AG should disclose to parents, and about half thought AGYW should disclose to partners (52% AG, 57% YW) (see Figure 1). In IDIs, providers said that disclosing PrEP use could make adherence easier. Whether an AGYW disclosed PrEP use to her partner and parents or if they discovered she was taking PrEP could make adherence easier. Although AGYW are sexually active, or disapproval of her being sexually active.

“Her parents are her support system, so her parents need to be dedicated as much as she is dedicated. They should support her physically, mentally and […] encourage her to say that […] what you are doing is actually good for your health.”

– Female peer educator, in PrEP experience, age 20, South Africa

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CONCLUSIONS

Although PrEP delivery differs across countries, providers shared similar attitudes. Providers were generally supportive of PrEP for both age groups, but had more reservations about PrEP for AG. Hesitations about providing PrEP to AG seemed mostly related to negative attitudes about AG being sexually active and concern about the ability of AG to adhere, particularly if using PrEP without disclosing to parents and partners.

Recommendations & research utilization:

• Conduct values clarification training to help providers reflect on their personal views about AG being sexually active.
• Deliver tailored technical support to PrEP providers to help them deliver services that are responsive to the needs of AGYW.
• Assess which forms of provider support are most effective at increasing AGYW PrEP adherence and retention.
• Build providers’ capacity to counsel AGYW on whether/how to disclose PrEP use to partners and parents.
• Conduct community sensitization about PrEP as a prevention option for AGYW—particularly targeting parents/guardians and male partners—to make it easier for AGYW to use PrEP.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Michele Lanham, Technical Advisor FHI 360, Durham, NC, USA mlanham@fhi360.org

STUDIES Consortium Partners

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