Identification of HIV-positive male partners and changes in sexual behavior following secondary distribution of HIV self-tests by high-risk women in Kenya

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Introduction

- Secondary distribution of HIV self-tests by women to their male sexual partners has been shown to increase male partner testing.
- However, there is limited data on the extent to which this approach results in identification of HIV-positive partners or changes in sexual decision making.

Methods

- Data derived from an ongoing cluster-randomized trial of an HIV self-testing intervention in Siaya County, Kenya (NCT03135067 – the Jikinge Study).
- 66 communities were randomized into intervention (participants given multiple self tests for secondary distribution to their partners) and comparison (participants given multiple referral coupons for facility-based testing).
- Eligibility: HIV-negative, age ≥18 years, ≥2 sexual partners in past 4 weeks.
- Participants in intervention clusters received 5 oral fluid-based HIV self-tests at enrollment and additional self-tests as needed at 3-month intervals.
- 6-month follow-up data are presented from intervention arm only.
- Participants reported on self-test distribution, partner testing, partner test result, and sexual behavior in their 3 most recent transactional sex encounters.

Results

- Among the 1,058 participants in the intervention clusters, 922 (87%) completed the 6 month follow-up.
- 3.6 tests per participant were distributed to sexual partners, and 153 sexual partners (0.17 per participant) were identified as HIV-positive.
- Condom use was significantly higher with transactional sex partners who obtained a HIV-negative versus reactive result (56% vs. 90%, p<0.01), and versus those who were not offered or refused to self-test (56% vs. 64%, p<0.01).

Discussion

- Secondary distribution of HIV self-tests is a promising strategy for reaching men who have been traditionally hard to reach with testing.
- Identifying and scaling-up effective HIV prevention strategies that increase condom use, decrease risky sexual behaviors and promote HIV testing, are essential for reducing HIV risk.