

HIV PrEP for female-sex-workers in the context of combination HIV prevention: Impact on community-wide awareness, uptake and perceptions in a rural area KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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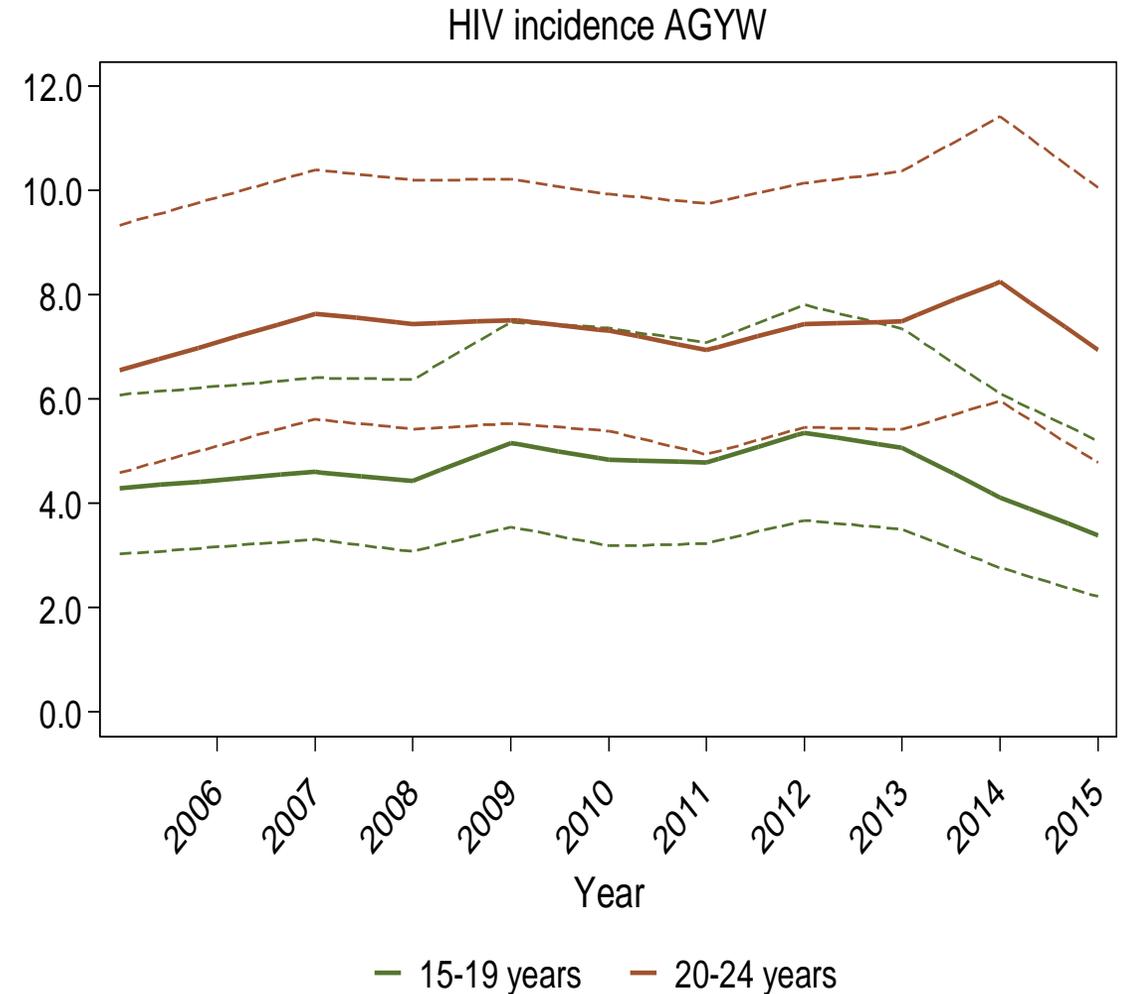
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Background

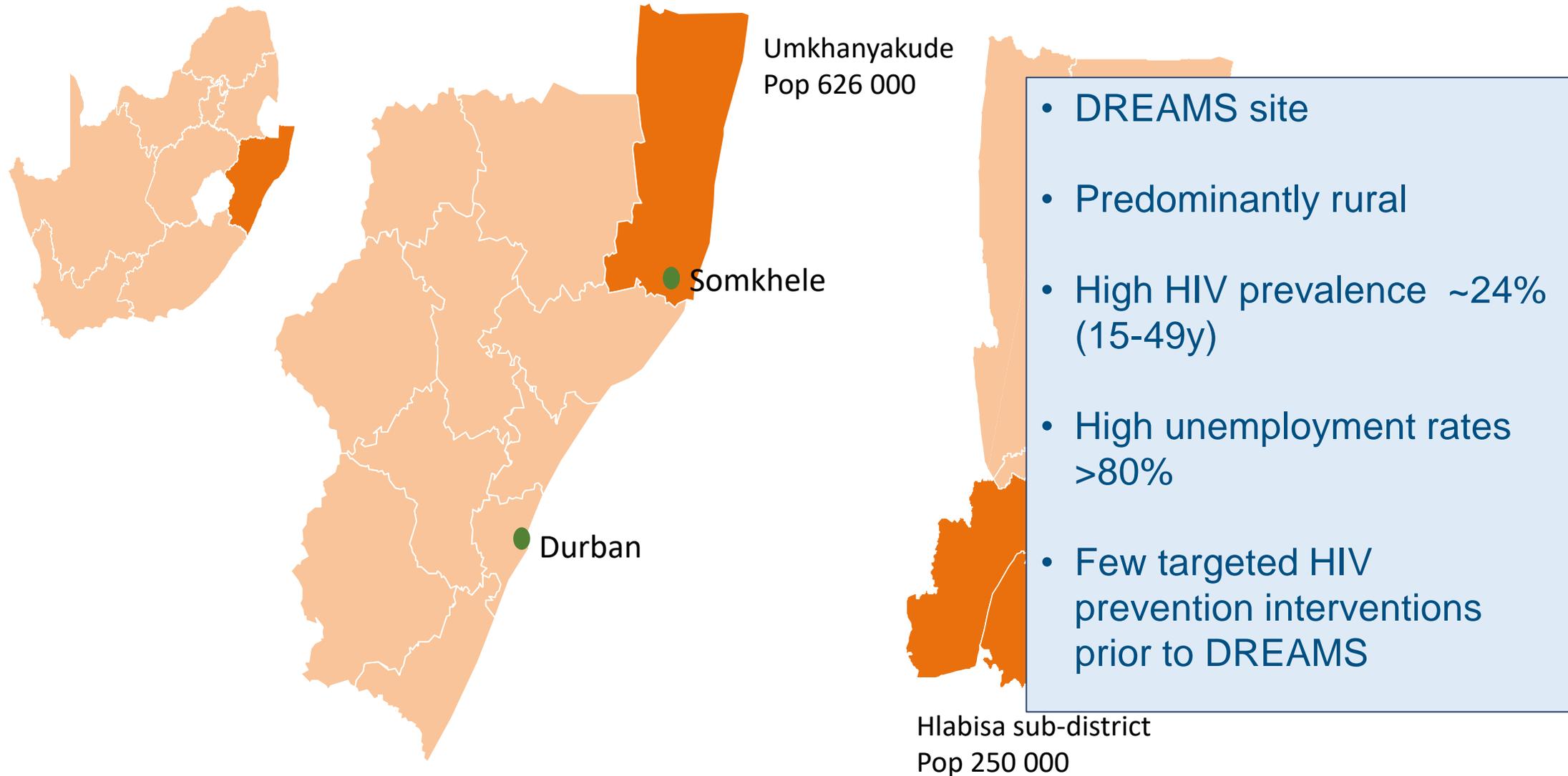
- Young people in South Africa remain at highest risk of HIV acquisition
[Chimbindi et al 2018, Baisley et al 2018]
- A variety of effective HIV prevention tools are available including Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
- PrEP roll-out was part of PEPFAR-funded DREAMS partnership
 - Targeting young female-sex-workers
 - Roll-out 2016-2018



Aim

1. Describe PrEP eligibility, awareness and uptake among a representative cohort of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW)
 - a) We use an HIV prevention cascade framework to understand how implementation impacted at population-level, demand and uptake of PrEP
2. Describe how this targeted roll-out affected community members' perceptions towards PrEP

Study setting



Study Design

Mixed-method process evaluation

- participatory community mapping (2017) & quantitative survey (2017-18)

Community-mapping of 4 purposively sampled communities

- Key in-depth interviews with implementing partners (n=33) & young people (n=58)
- Community based group discussions (n=19)
- Stakeholder interviews (n=9)

Quantitative survey

- Enrolled a representative cohort of n=2184 AGYW aged 13-22 years
- Collected data on uptake of HIV prevention, including eligibility, awareness and uptake of PrEP
- Data collected electronically and self-filled

Characteristics of nested cohort baseline (N=2184)

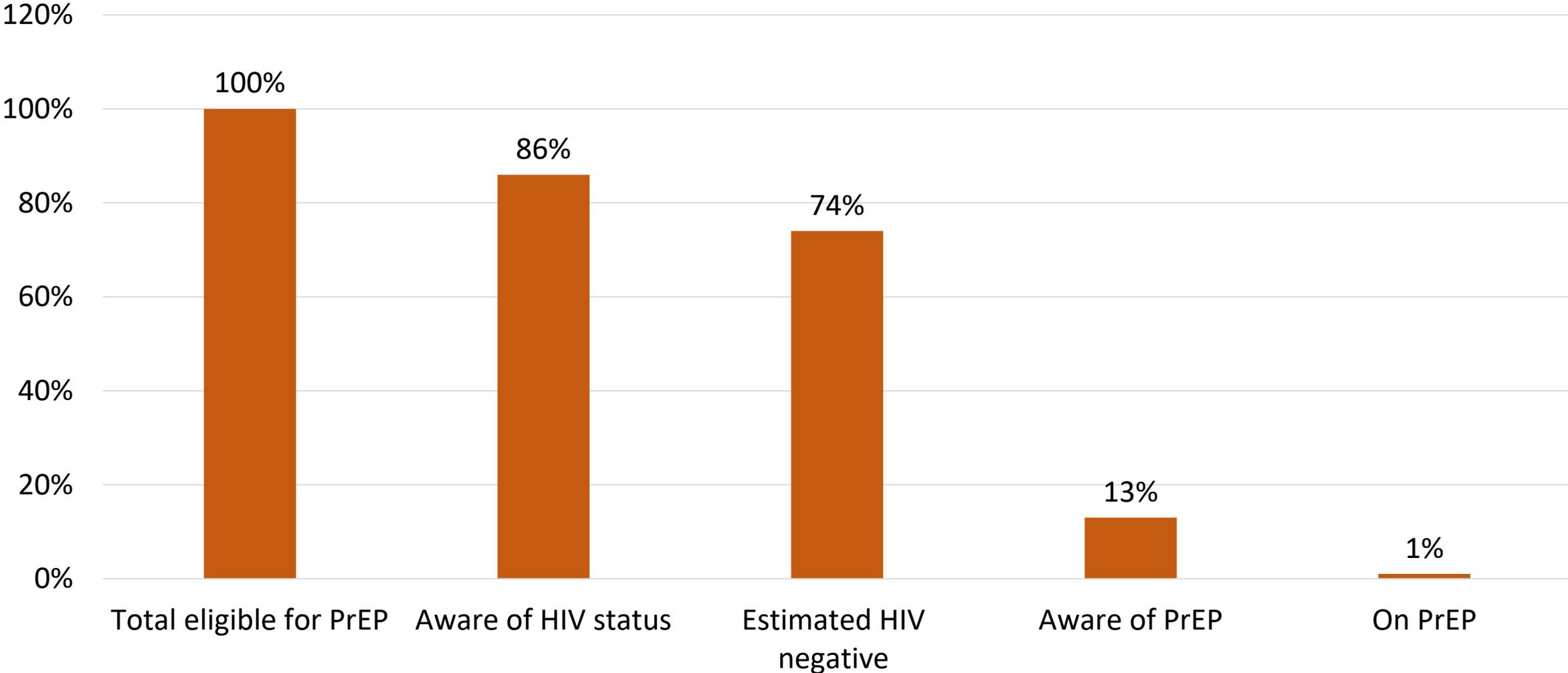
Characteristic	% (95% CI)
Age group	
13-17	52.6 (50.5-54.7)
18-22	47.4 (45.3-49.5)
Location	
Rural	64.1 (62.1-66.1)
Peri-urban	30.5 (28.6-32.5)
Urban	5.4 (4.5-6.4)
Currently in school (Yes)	75.3 (73.4-77.0)
Ever migrated in the past years (Yes)	18.5 (16.9-20.1)
Food insecurity (Yes)	31.2 (29.3-33.2)

PrEP awareness for AGYW (N=2184)

- PrEP awareness increased from 2.0% (95% CI:1.5-2.7%) in 2017 to 9.0% (95% CI:7.3-9.8%) in 2018 ($p<0.001$)
- 44.2% reported being sexually active
- Among the 194 PrEP-eligible AGYW:
 - 13.4% AGYW reported transactional sex
 - 10.6% AGYW reported sex for money



HIV prevention cascade for PrEP-eligible AGYW (n=194)



■ Adolescent girls and young women involved in transactional sex and eligible for PrEP n=194

Community and young people's awareness of PrEP

- Interview respondents were generally unaware of PrEP
- Some young people it was their first time to hear about PrEP and could not attach meaning to it

“I don't know what it means even in Zulu”

- Most community members were not aware of PrEP, often confusing it with post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)



Community and young people's benefit of PrEP

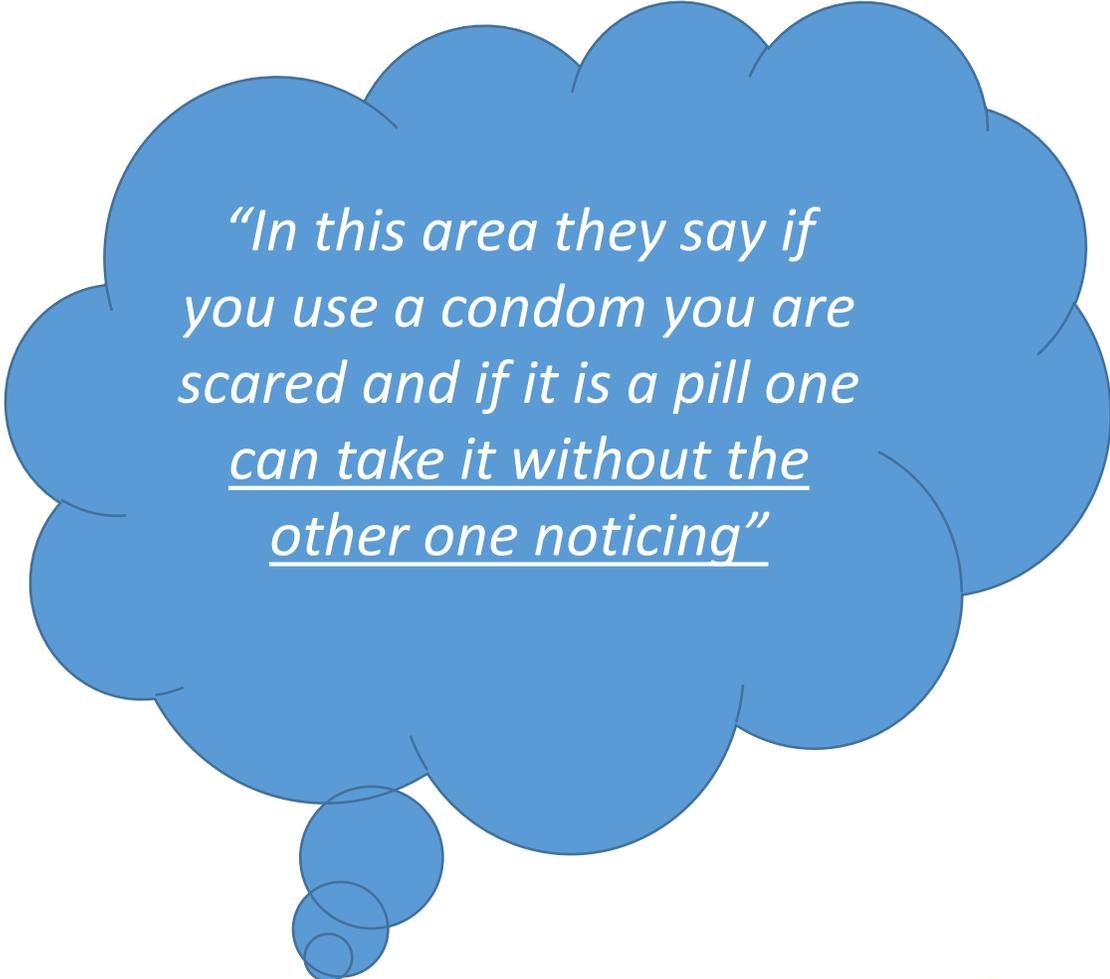
- PrEP was seen as a possible alternative to condoms,

“eating sweets in a wrapping paper” and

“killing your babies”

Because

“...it will be in their system”



“In this area they say if you use a condom you are scared and if it is a pill one can take it without the other one noticing””

Community and young people's benefit/candidates of PrEP

- PrEP was imagined would benefit young people, discordant couples and those with long-distance partners
- PrEP was thought to be more beneficial to boys or young men who were believed to *“love sex more than women”*

“I think it is a good thing because...those who are in relationships with older people who are infected, they can be able to get treatment beside leaving him because of his HIV status.”

Community members attitude towards PrEP

- Teachers and healthcare providers were more ambivalent about PrEP

“Mmm doing that will mean setting them free to engage into unprotected sexual intercourse anyhow”

Conclusion

- PrEP awareness increased and was generally acceptable
- Uptake was low amongst eligible AGYW who reported FSW activity
- Targeted nature of public-sector PrEP may have affected reach and may affect future roll-out of PrEP to the wider population
- Community-based approaches to PrEP education and provision, including engagement of youth and key stakeholders, may help improve demand for, access to, and optimise the PrEP cascade

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