

HIV-positive and -negative women's experiences with infertility and their care seeking behavior in Johannesburg, South Africa

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Background

- It has been noted that HIV-positive individuals continue to plan for future childbearing after diagnosis (*Cooper 2007, Myer 2007, Kaida 2011*).
- Yet research has shown that being HIV-positive can reduce fertility.
 - In multi-parous women, pregnancy risk was reduced by between 16% and 26% across three African cities (*Glynn 2000*).
- Antiretroviral medication can impact positively on fertility in HIV-positive individuals, but sero-discordance in couples can cause challenges.
- Despite high antiretroviral availability and known challenges with sero-discordant relationships, safe conception and fertility-related services are rare in South Africa's public health sector.

Study Aims / Location

1

To assess needs for and uptake of **SRH** services among women attending clinics in Johannesburg.

2

To explore the barriers to accessing **SRH** services if any.

3

To estimate women's costs of accessing **SRH** services.

SRH = Fertility , contraception, cervical cancer, breast cancer, abortion, STIs, GBV

Methods



Semi-structured interviews with women at clinics

- Eligibility: aged 18-49
- Systematic random sample
- Face-to-face interview
- Locations and timing:
 - HIV treatment site: Jun-Nov 2015
 - 2 PHCs: April-August 2016
- Analysis:
 - Descriptive statistics (Stata 14)
 - Thematic analysis

Presenting
fertility
outcomes
today

Question on infertility during study

1. Have you tried to become pregnant during the last year?

If yes:

2. Did you experience any problems while trying to fall pregnant?

If yes:

**3. Did you try to get help for your problem?
(And if yes, where and at what cost?)**

If no:

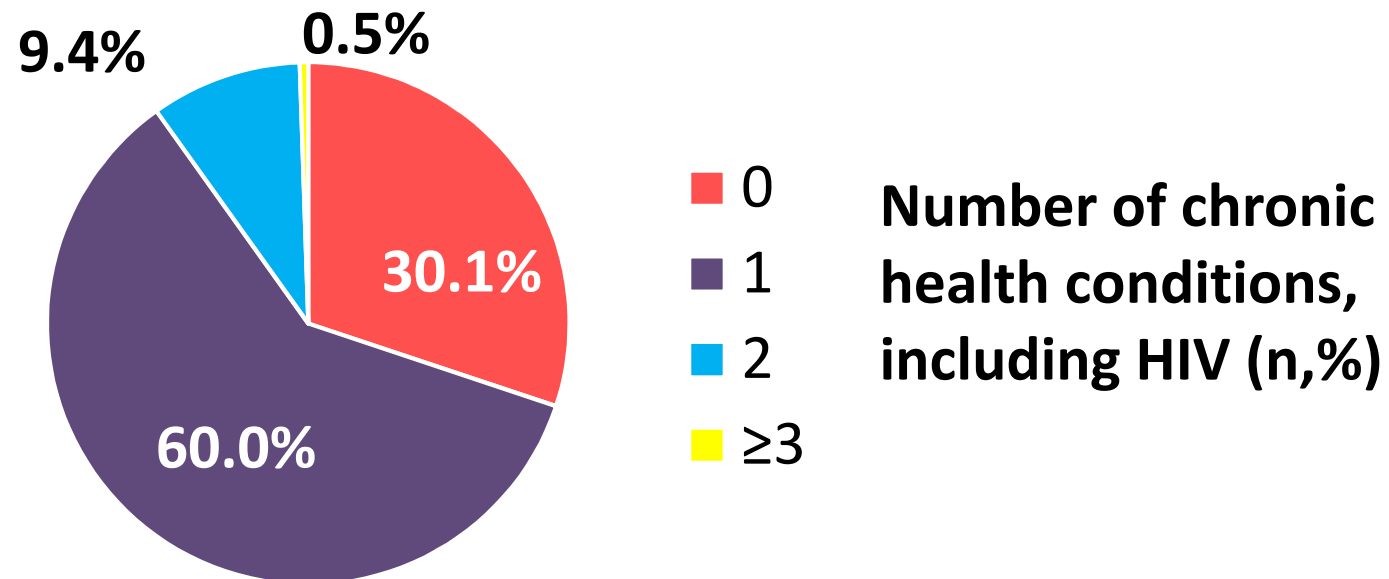
4. If no, why not?

Most participants were married. Two-thirds were HIV+.
(N=385)

Age	Median [IQR]	36.6 [29.7-41.9]
Marital Status	Married, unmarried/cohabitating	169 (43.9)
	Partner, but not living together	140 (36.4)
	Single	19 (4.9)
	Divorced/separated/widowed	57 (14.8)
Race	Black African	337 (87.5)
	White	2 (0.5)
	Coloured	46 (12.0)
	Asian	0 (0.0)
Nationality	South African	305 (79.2)
	Non-South African	80 (20.8)
Educational attainment	Grade 7 or less	29 (7.5)
	Grade 8-11	179 (46.5)
	Grade 12/matriculated	123 (32.0)
	Diploma/certificate/degree	54 (14.0)
HIV-positive		256 (66.5)

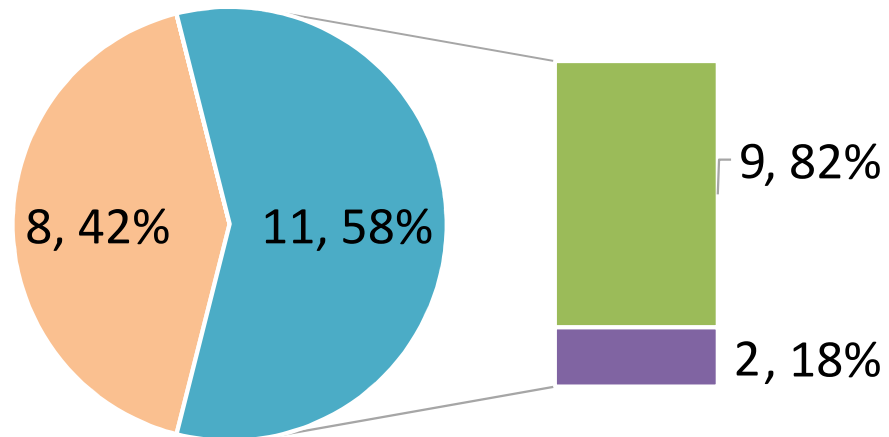
Most were employed and breadwinners at home.

Employment status	Unemployed	131 (34.0)
	Self-employed (formal/informal)	23 (6.0)
	Employed (part/full time)	217 (56.4)
	Unable to work or other	14 (3.6)
Primary breadwinner at home?	Yes	185 (48.1)



Forty women (10%) of all respondents tried to get pregnant in the last 12 months. Fifteen (37.5%) reported problems.

HIV-positive (n=256)

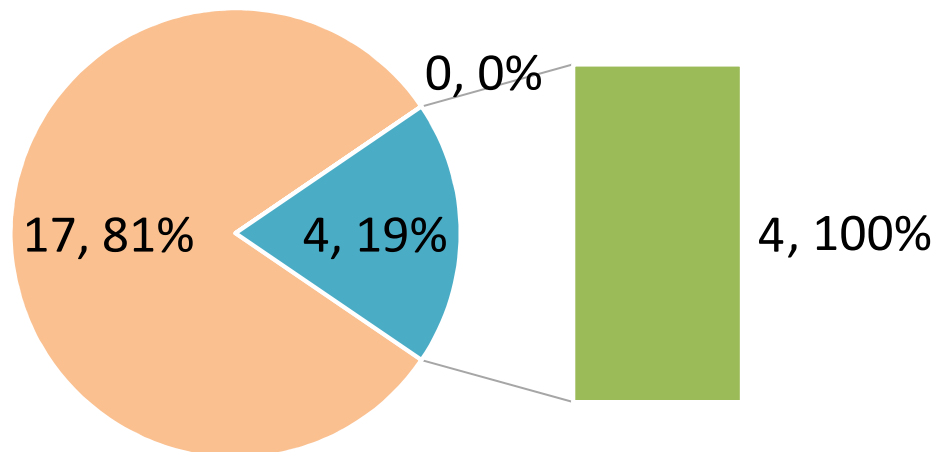


YES, EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS

Sought professional help

Did not seek professional help

HIV-negative/unknown (n=129)



YES, EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS

Sought professional help



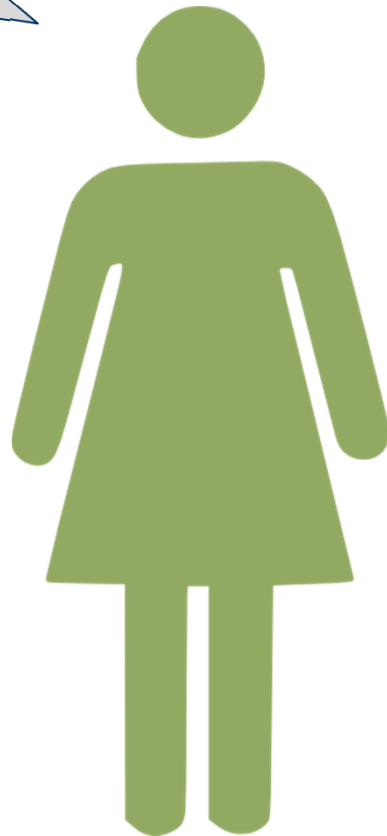
13 women visited 16 locations for help. Just 5 (38.5%) reported getting the assistance they sought.

	Public hospital/clinic	Private facility	Traditional healer
No. of visits	n=10	n=5	n=1
Travel & wait time per visit (mean)	1.2 hrs	1.9 hrs	2.5 hrs
Travel cost per visit (mean)	R2.61	R9.44	R100.00

Missed work	n=4 (mean 3.3 days)
Mean lost wages	R107.50
Total “other” costs per woman (mean)	R506.84
Total cost per woman (mean)	R552.77

Reasons for not seeking professional help (n=2)

“I was stressed and again I thought it was natural” – aged 37



“Because I do not know where to get help.” – aged 23

Discussion

- Among women who tried to fall pregnant in the last year:



57.9% of HIV-positive women reported experiencing fertility problems.



19.1% of HIV-negative women reported experiencing fertility problems.

- Possible over/underestimate of actual prevalence. We only spoke to women in clinics.
- Infertility questions were one section in larger SRH interview.

Discussion and conclusions

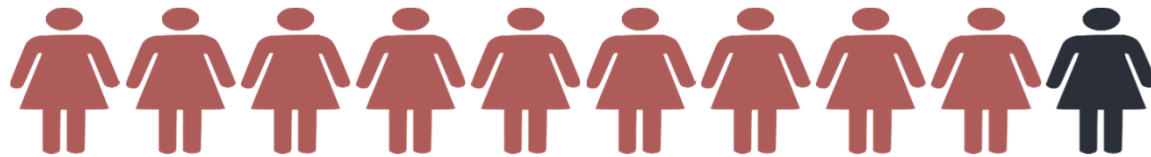
- The costs reported were direct costs only. We did not measure indirect costs.
- Recall bias? All questions were once off and required recollection of the previous year.



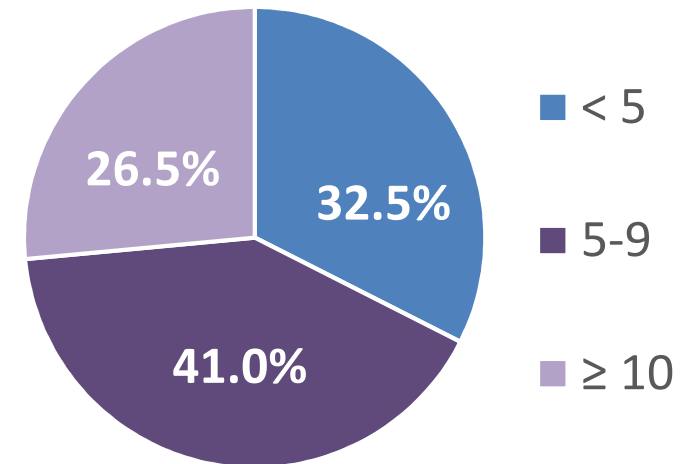
- Of the 15 women who experienced fertility problems, 86.7% (n=13) sought professional help, and just 33.3% (n=5) reported getting help.

Recommendations

Many HIV-positive and -negative women alike may have questions about or require care for perceived infertility.



When asked in this study **91.4% of women said they would like information on SRH services spontaneously offered at all clinic visits.**



Need to ensure service availability.

No. of visits to a health facility in last 12 months (n=385) (n,%)

Thank you

For further information

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