

Perspectives and Preferences for Multi-Purpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) to Address Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Needs Among Adolescent Girls and Young women (AGYW) in Nairobi and Kampala

UPTAKE

www.UPTAKEstudy.org



Authors: Lunani, L.L.¹; Namukwaya, S.²; Lipesa, S.¹; Kombo, B.¹; Omodi, D.¹; Shikuku, J.¹; Omom, C.¹; Maina, A.¹; Malogo, R.¹; Katumba, K.²; Kayesu, I.²; Nabalwany, Z.²; Naluwoza, R.²; Mayanja, Y.²; Omosa-Manyonyi, G.¹; Anzala, O.¹; Indravudh, P.³; Quaiye, M.³; Gao, L.⁴; Kuteesa, M.⁵; Machira, Y.⁶; Kamali, A.⁵; and Gafos, M.³

¹KAVI Institute of Clinical Research, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya; ²MRC/UVRI & LSHTM (MUL) Uganda Research Unit, Entebbe, Uganda; ³London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), London, United Kingdom; ⁴Busara Center for Behavioural Economics, Nairobi, Kenya; ⁵International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), Entebbe, Uganda; ⁶International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), Nairobi, Kenya

BACKGROUND:

AGYW in Sub Saharan Africa are disproportionately affected by high rates of HIV¹, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unintended pregnancies. To inform development of MPTs and delivery of SRH services, an innovative behavioural science research project (UPTAKE) seeks to determine factors that facilitate future acceptability and uptake of long-acting (LA) technologies to prevent HIV and unintended pregnancy among AGYW in Nairobi, Kenya and Kampala, Uganda.

STUDY RATIONALE:

We conducted in-depth interviews with 30 AGYW aged 15-24 years in Nairobi and Kampala. We explored participants' perceptions of future MPTs, building on their experiences and views of existing family planning (FP) and HIV prevention products. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and translated. Data were analysed thematically in NVivo and reconciled iteratively during reflective sessions with the research teams.

RESULTS:

An interim analysis shows that AGYW generally have a limited understanding of the FP and HIV prevention options available to them. Most of them reported early sexual debut, premature school dropout, a lack of family and social support, and engaging in age-disparate sexual relationships, transactional sex or sex work. Participants reported unintended pregnancies and initiated FP only after childbirth.

“ So, there is this idea of people saying that FP is only for people who are married like those who already have their first child or second child, for me, I was just a girl and I didn't have any baby, so he was not happy about the idea. ”
AGYW, 17 years,

There were misconceptions and a lack of trust in modern HIV prevention methods, with some viewing PrEP as a drug for HIV positive individuals. Only AGYW engaging in sex work demonstrated awareness of PrEP. Side effects caused some participants to temporarily or permanently discontinue the use of current family planning (FP) and HIV prevention products and there were reports of community and service provider stigma towards AGYW while accessing SRH services.



RESULTS CONTINUED:

In terms of future MPTs, most participants preferred LA injectables (>1-year) given on the arm, providing HIV and pregnancy prevention. Participants expressed limited interest in prevention for other STIs, which they considered treatable. Government facilities were the preferred choice for future delivery of MPTs due to affordability.

AGYW described themselves as decision-makers in relation to SRH, while acknowledging the need for new products citing women's limited ability to negotiate HIV testing and condom use with male partners.

CONCLUSION:

LA MPTs offer considerable potential for reducing HIV infection and unintended pregnancies among AGYW. This is a promising finding for the development of MPTs. Governments need to prepare for the introduction of MPT products once available, especially in regions where AGYW's HIV infection and unintended pregnancies remains high.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

With thanks to the research participants for making this study possible and to AIDS 2022 for the scholarship award.

REFERENCES:

1. UNAIDS Fact Sheet: World AIDS Day. [cited 2022 May 9]. Available from: https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/UNAIDS_FactSheet_en.pdf



Laura L. Lunani
KAVI-ICR, University of Nairobi
Laura.Lunani@lshtm.ac.uk
LLusike@kaviuon.org

