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Track 4: Social drivers of the epidemic: Society, race, class, culture, stigma, violence, diversity and challenges

Abstract title:

Association between HIV testing and exposure to the Rise Club component of a combination HIV prevention intervention among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) in South Africa (SA)

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Background: In SA, AGYW are at high risk for HIV infection and have sub-optimal HIV testing uptake. Between 2016-18, a combination HIV-prevention package for AGYWs was implemented in ten districts with high burden of HIV infection. One intervention component, the Rise Clubs and Rise magazines, sought to build AGYW resilience and empowerment, and linkage to sexual and reproductive health services including HIV testing.

Objective: To determine whether exposure to the Rise intervention was associated with recent (past 12 months) HIV testing among AGYW.

Method: As part of an investigation of the impact of the prevention package on HIV incidence and risk behaviour, during 2017-18 we conducted a representative household survey among AGYW aged 15-24 years living in six of the intervention districts. Exposure to Rise was defined as participation in Rise Clubs and/or having seen the Rise magazine. We conducted an analysis of the district-level risk differences in recent HIV testing between Rise exposed and non-exposed AGYW. We then performed a meta-analysis across the districts using a random-effects model to obtain a pooled estimate and 95% confidence interval. The analysis weights were based on the realised sample size of each district.

Results:

The sample included 4,415 AGYW. The reported Rise exposure varied between 11% (Zululand) and 51% (OR Tambo) across districts (overall 21%). Past-year HIV testing varied between 59% (Zululand) and 72% (OR Tambo) across districts (overall 62%). The HIV testing risk differences between AGYW exposed and not exposed to Rise varied between -3% (Tshwane) and 13% (OR Tambo) across districts and the pooled risk difference from the meta-analysis was 7% (95% Confidence Interval: 1 -12%).

Conclusion: Exposure to the Rise intervention was associated with a modest increase in recent HIV testing among AGYW. The follow-up survey in 2020 will explore whether ongoing exposure to the Rise intervention resulted in sustained HIV testing.

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