

## Oral Session 2

# 09 Investigating the pregnancy and post-partum health experiences of women living with HIV: The NESTOR study

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# Investigating the pregnancy and postpartum health experiences of women living with HIV

By Rebecca Cooper

Medical Sciences Research BSc Degree  
Project

# Background

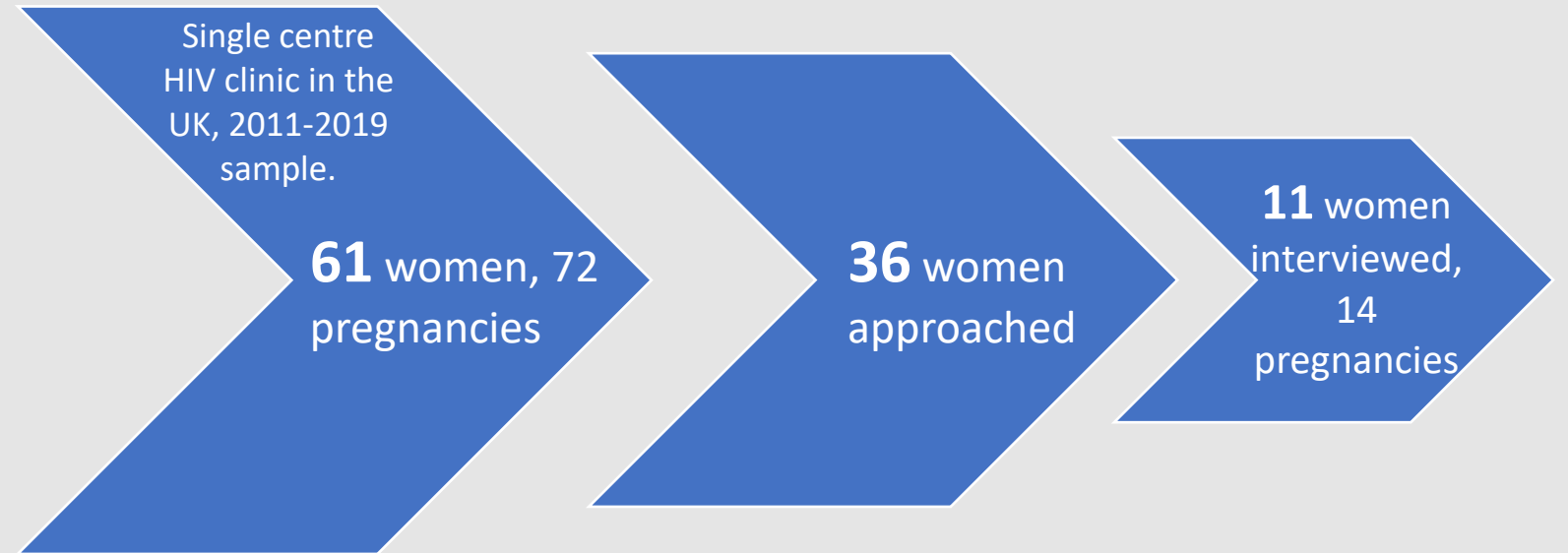
Previous literature shows a reduced engagement with HIV care postpartum

Little existing literature on health experiences

Local experience of women living with HIV

Sought to gain deeper insight

# Methods



DESCRIPTIVE  
QUALITATIVE STUDY



SEMI-STRUCTURED  
PATIENT INTERVIEWS



THEMATIC ANALYSIS

# Findings

## Infant Feeding Decisions

Theme 1

Making the Decision

Managing the social pressure

## Managing the risk of mother-to-child transmission

Theme 2

Concerns of transmission

Managing the risk of transmission

## Managing the knowledge of their HIV status

Theme 3

Threats to disclosure

Minimising the risk of disclosure

Sub-themes

# Infant Feeding Decisions

## Making the decision

*“I would have loved to be able to feed my child with my body, but it just wasn’t an option, so I just had to get my head round that”  
(participant 10)*

## Managing the social pressure

*“I’ve had people say to me, I’m such a bad mother, I’ve had people say that I am trying to keep my shape that’s why I am not breastfeeding”  
(participant 2)*

# Managing the risk of mother-to-child transmission

## Concerns of transmission

*“I’m just particular about having safe delivery, safe baby, HIV free baby.” (participant 2)*

## Managing the risk of transmission

*“there was a time when I missed a dose, but I panicked. I felt like I had literally dropped her on the floor.” (participant 7)*

# Managing the knowledge of their HIV status

## Threats to disclosure

*“there were more people in the circle of trust because I was pregnant...and then nurses and everybody knowing, so I felt like, almost like I couldn't quite hold my information” (participant 11)*

## Minimising the risk of disclosure

*“they were able to give me **my own room**, so I was okay to talk about [my HIV openly] when people came in”. (participant 4)*



# Discussion

Increased risk of disclosure during pregnancy and postpartum

Role of healthcare staff across maternity and HIV services

Current HIV and pregnancy/postpartum guidance

# Limitations

Representative  
sample

Sample size

Bias

# Conclusion

- What have we learnt?
  - Hidden social and emotional impact of not breastfeeding
  - Psychological burden of possible risk of transmission
  - HIV stigma and fear of disclosure during pregnancy and postpartum

# Thank you!

- **Any questions?**

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**BHIVA** 

British HIV Association

# 2022 Spring Conference

**Wed 20<sup>th</sup> - Fri 22<sup>nd</sup> April**  
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