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

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Medical Sciences Research BSc Degree Project
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


- 61 women, 72 pregnancies
- 36 women approached
- 11 women interviewed, 14 pregnancies

DESCRIPTIVE QUALITATIVE STUDY

SEMI-STRUCTURED PATIENT INTERVIEWS

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

36 women approached, 14 pregnancies
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
Infant Feeding Decisions

Making the decision

“It 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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