

Partnership Dynamics and HIV-Related Sexual Behaviors among Adolescent Mothers in South Africa: A Longitudinal Analysis of HIV Prevention Trials Network 068 Data

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Abstract

In South Africa, adolescent mothers have a three times higher risk of HIV acquisition than nonadolescent mothers. Yet, limited evidence exists regarding how early childbearing may affect HIV risk. A better understanding of adolescent mothers' partnership dynamics and sexual behaviors is critical to tailoring interventions to prevent new infections. Data are from HIV Prevention Trials Network 068, a longitudinal study of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) aged 13–20 in South Africa who were followed annually for up to 6 years. Log-binomial regression models were used to assess whether adolescent motherhood was associated with partnership dynamics (intimate partner violence, gender inequitable norms, low relationship power, no HIV prevention communication) and if the association between partnership dynamics and sexual behaviors (unprotected sex and transactional sex) varied by adolescent motherhood. Generalized estimating equations, with an exchangeable correlation structure, were used to account for nonindependence. Adolescent mothers were more likely than nonadolescent mothers to be in partnerships characterized by intimate partner violence, low relationship power, gender inequitable norms, and no HIV prevention communication.

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