

High Levels of Vulnerability among Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) Enrolled in a Crossover Pilot Study of a Dual Prevention Pill for HIV and Pregnancy Prevention in Harare, Zimbabwe

Miriam Nkangu¹, Marlena Plagianos¹, Adlight Dandadzi², Vanessa Gatsi², Sheu Matimbira², Caroline Murombedzi², Petina Musara², Irene V Bruce¹, J Brady Burnett-Zieman¹, Nyaradzo M Mgodzi², Sanyukta Mathur¹, Barbara A Friedland¹

¹Population Council, ²University of Zimbabwe-Clinical Trials Research Center

Behavioral, (e.g., limited condom use) social (e.g., power imbalance in sexual relationships) and structural factors (e.g., food insecurity) heighten AGYW vulnerability to HIV and/or unintended pregnancy.

Most want to avoid pregnancy and are worried about HIV.

The single dual prevention pill was preferred by most AGYW and could be a potential intervention strategy for HIV and unintended pregnancy prevention.

BACKGROUND

- Oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is effective for HIV prevention, but uptake among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) has been low due to multiple factors, such as power dynamics, economic status, stigma, and education.
- A dual prevention pill (DPP) combining PrEP with oral contraception (OC) could potentially increase PrEP uptake and address stigma associated with using Truvada for PrEP, since it is the same drug that is used for HIV treatment.



Combined Oral Contraceptive Pills

Oral PrEP

- We describe baseline characteristics of AGYW in a study evaluating the acceptability of an over-encapsulated DPP.

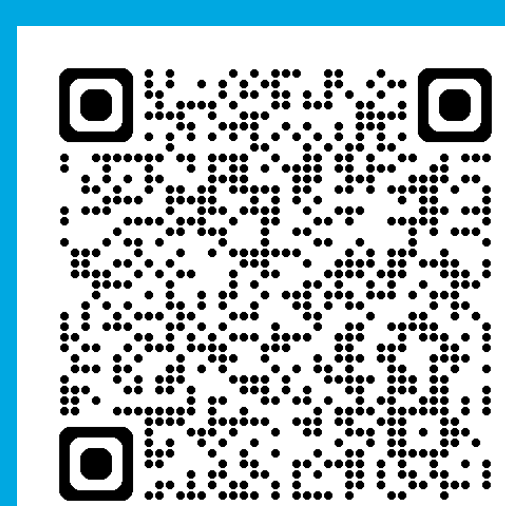
METHODS

- We enrolled 30 sexually active, HIV-uninfected, non-pregnant, 16- to 24-year-olds in a crossover study comparing a DPP capsule to a 2-pill regimen (PrEP and OCs taken separately), each used for 3 months.
- Participants completed a baseline survey in Shona via computer-assisted self-interviewing.
- We present descriptive statistics on participants' baseline characteristics, sexual behavior and partnership characteristics, their perspectives on HIV and pregnancy avoidance, and PrEP use.
- We also present baseline preference for the DPP regimen as compared to the 2-pill regimen (Figure 1).

FUNDING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Funding for this research was generously provided by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation and the National Institute of Mental Health of the U.S. National Institutes of Health under Award Number R34MH119982. Truvada was donated by Gilead.

For more information, contact **BARBARA FRIEDLAND** at bfriedland@popcouncil.org



SCAN ME for more information about this project.

RESULTS

- Mean age of participants was 19 y/o, most (97%) had completed only primary education, and almost half were (47%) married.
- A quarter of the participants had multiple sexual partners, most had not used a condom at last sex, about a quarter had experienced sexual violence, and the majority felt that their partner had more say in the relationship (see Table 2).
- Most participants were worried about HIV, almost half thought they had been exposed to HIV; yet only 2 participants had used PrEP before joining the study (see Table 3).

Table 1. Background characteristics (N=30)

	mean	SD
Age in years	19.4	2.4
	n	%
Education		
Primary	29	97
Secondary	1	3
Marital status		
Never married	6	20
Married	14	47
Divorced	9	30
Other	1	3
Whole day or night w/out food (past 4 weeks)		
Never	12	40
Rarely	7	23
Sometimes/Often	11	37

Table 2. Sexual behavior & partnership characteristics (n=29)

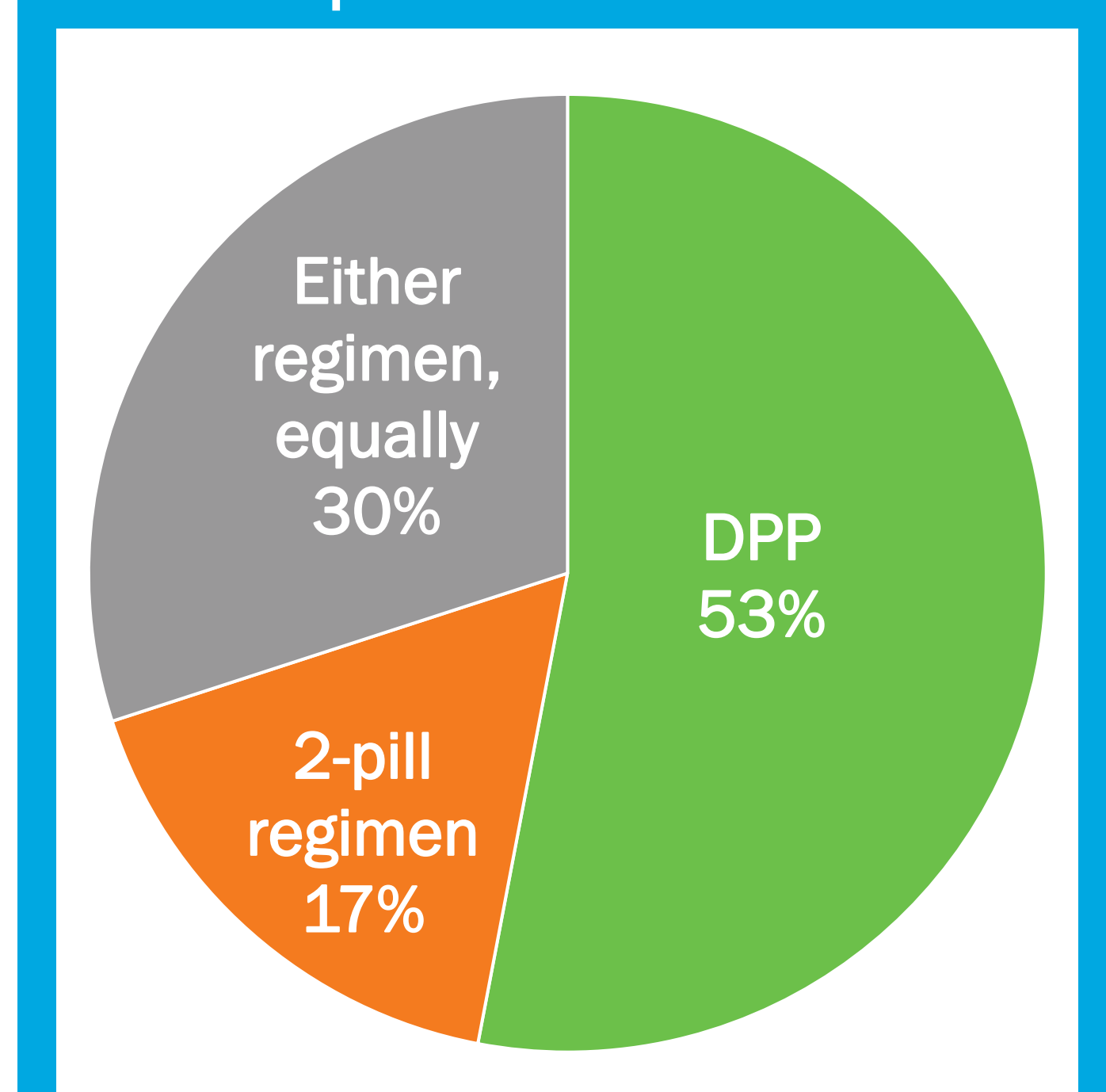
	n	%
Number of sex partners, past 3 months		
0	1	3.4
1	17	58.6
2+	11	37.9
Used condoms at last sex (n=22)	7	33.3
Had sex with >1 partner, past 3 months	11	36.6
Partner living with HIV (n=28)	1*	3.6
Ever physically forced to have sex from partner (n=27*)	4	14.8
Ever experienced violence from partner (n=27*)	6	22.2
Stayed in relationship for financial/material gain	8	27.6
Agree that partner has more say on important decisions in the relationship (n=24*)	13	54.7
Agree that partner will angry if asked to use a condom (n=24*)	12	50.0

*excludes participants who refused to answer the question

Table 3. Perspectives and experiences on HIV and pregnancy avoidance (N=30)

	n	%
Worried about getting HIV within 3 months (n=29)		
Very worried/somewhat worried	25	86.2
Not worried/not very worried	4	13.8
How likely is it that you have been exposed to HIV in the past 4 weeks (n=28)		
Very/somewhat likely	13	46.4
Very unlikely	4	14.3
Don't know	11	39.3
Used PrEP before (n=24)	2	8.3
How important is it to you to avoid pregnancy		
Very important	27	90.0
Somewhat/a little important	2	6.6
Don't know	1	3.3

Figure 1. Baseline regimen preference



CONCLUSION

- Baseline data indicate multiple risk HIV factors among AGYW, few of whom had ever used PrEP.
- Interest in the DPP indicates the potential that a dual prevention method may give AGYW choice to prevent both HIV and unintended pregnancy.

