

International

Effects of HIV/AIDS Stigma on Use of Services by Pregnant Women in Kenya

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Project Description: This is a prospective study using structured interviews and data from medical records, as well as a qualitative study using in-depth interviews. This study will be conducted in conjunction with a CDC-funded study to be carried out by the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)-UCSF, Family AIDS Care & Education Services, Nyanza Province, Kenya, and will take advantage of the resources of that larger study. The project aims are:

1. to identify the effects of anticipated stigma and perceived community stigma on acceptance of HIV testing among pregnant women who use ANC services,
2. to prospectively investigate the effects of anticipated stigma and perceived community stigma on pregnant women's subsequent use of ANC, delivery, and postpartum services,
3. to investigate whether stigma can shed light on the mechanisms through which ANC and HIV service integration may affect HIV-positive pregnant women's use of maternity and HIV services, and
4. to use qualitative research methods to elucidate the role of HIV/AIDS stigma as a barrier to health service use among women in the community who do not use facility-based maternity services.

This research will prepare for designing and testing an intervention for reducing HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination experienced by pregnant women in Kenya, and will contribute to public health efforts to improve the health of pregnant women in low-resource settings.

Significance: We know from our previous research that considerations related to HIV/AIDS adversely affect both uptake and provision of maternity services in Kenya. Participants reported that fears of HIV testing, involuntary disclosure of HIV status to others including spouses, and HIV/AIDS stigma are among the reasons that women avoid delivering in health facilities. HIV/AIDS also negatively affects service provision, including deaths and illness of maternity workers, increased workloads, discriminatory practices based on HIV status, and difficulties dealing with disclosure. HIV/AIDS stigma may constitute an important barrier to pregnant women's use of health services and efforts to understand and reduce HIV/AIDS stigma will have important implications for HIV prevention and treatment, as well as for maternal health and mortality.

Project End Date: 2012