



HIV counselling and testing among pregnant women in Hai Phong Province, Vietnam

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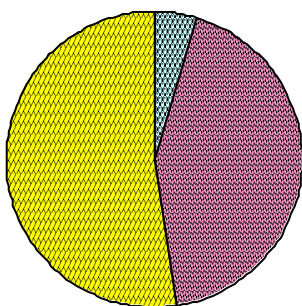
Mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV remains a major public health problem worldwide, especially in resource poor countries. Despite the increasing availability of programmes aiming at preventing MTCT uptake HIV testing and PMTCT services remain low. This project assessed the uptake of HIV test during pregnancy and labour, and described the association between socio-economic factors and acceptance of HIV test among Vietnamese women.

It shows that only 45% of the women who attended Hai Phong Obstetrical Hospital had been tested for HIV in relation to antenatal care (ANC). The remaining 55% were first tested for HIV at labour. The results further suggest a relationship between the patient's distance from the hospital and lack of HIV testing during ANC. (Exit interviews of 300 women who delivered at Hai Phong obstetrical hospital).

Findings

The results suggest that the majority of Vietnamese women are not tested for HIV during antenatal care (ANC) and further suggest a relationship between distance to the hospital and lack of HIV testing during ANC.

- 45% of respondents were tested for HIV before the end of 34 weeks of gestation, 5% in 35-40 weeks of gestation and 55% were first tested in relation to labour.
- In the unvaried analysis, low educational level, being a farmer or worker, low income and living close to the hospital were associated with being tested at labour. However, in the logistic regression analysis, only long distance to the hospital remained significantly associated with HIV testing during labour, pregnant women who lived more than 15km from the hospital had a significantly increased for not being tested during ANC.



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Conclusions and recommendations

- There is a real need to increase the number of pregnant women being tested for HIV during pregnancy to enable them to know their HIV status. If they are HIV negative, they receive counselling on how to avoid becoming infected with HIV/AIDS. If they are HIV positive, they know how to prevent infecting others and receive treatment to prevent HIV transmission to infants during pregnancy or at labour, thereby, helping HIV positive women to take care of and receive treatment for both themselves and their children.
- Issues identified that can help improve the uptake of HIV testing among pregnant women:
 - To create a convenient place for HIV testing and counselling for pregnant women by integrating such service in community health centres and ANC services.
 - Minimize the cost of HIV test at ANC clinics.

Partners

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