

Short Communication: Communication Between Pregnant Women and Male Partners About HIV Testing in the United States

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

TRANSLATIONAL MEDICINE ★

Carly M. Dahl, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology -
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine - Chicago Illinois
USA.

Emily S. Miller, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology -
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine - Chicago Illinois
USA

Karolina Leziak, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology -
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine - Chicago Illinois
USA

Jenise Jackson, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology -
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine - Chicago Illinois
USA

Lynn M. Yee, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology - Northwestern
University Feinberg School of Medicine - Chicago Illinois USA

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Abstract

Male partner uptake of HIV testing during antenatal care is poor despite women's reported desire for partner testing. This qualitative study of HIV-negative pregnant women and their partners in a high HIV prevalence city in the United States assessed communication between partners about HIV testing. Facilitators and barriers of partner testing were identified. Women are the driving force behind couples' communication; however, male partner uptake is underutilized. A

common barrier to male partner uptake is the concept of “negative by proxy,” as well as male partner lack of follow-up for testing and nondisclosure of results. Future research is needed to assess specific barriers to male partner HIV testing as an approach to preventing perinatal HIV transmission.

Elimination of perinatal human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) transmission is a critical goal of HIV public health interventions. HIV seroconversion during pregnancy significantly increases the risk of perinatal transmission, and prevention of transmission requires early knowledge of HIV status to employ necessary antenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum interventions.¹⁻³ Routine maternal HIV testing is recommended in pregnancy; however, a critical yet underutilized HIV prevention strategy is testing and knowledge of partner HIV status.⁴