

ABSTRACT

Adherence to Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) among HIV-Infected Perinatal Clinic Attendees and the Impact on Mother to Child (MTCT) Transmission of HIV in South East Regional Health Authority (SERHA), Jamaica

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HAART interventions can reduce the risk of MTCT to less than 2% in non-breastfeeding, and to 5% or less in breastfeeding populations. In Jamaica 1-1.03% of public sector antenatal clinic attendees are HIV infected, with MTCT occurring in 2-5% of exposed births. This study sought to determine the level of adherence to antiretrovirals for PMTCT, explore the factors influencing adherence and determine the rate of MTCT in the South East Regional Health Authority. One hundred and twenty two women on ARVs were enrolled and a standardized questionnaire used to collate demographic, psychosocial data, and determinants of adherence which was measured by 24hr and 7 day recall and In-depth interviews conducted on two HIV+ clients and a healthcare provider. DNA-PCR was used to determine infant diagnosis at three months of life.

Seventy three percent of the women commenced HAART during pregnancy for PMTCT. The majority, 72.1 and 64.8 percent respectively had good adherence based on 24 hr and 7 day recall respectively. Thirty eight percent were having repeat pregnancies with 28.5% having at least two pregnancies since being diagnosed, indicating missed opportunities in providing family planning services with less than half (47.5%) confiding in their Child's Father and disclosed their HIV status to them. There were no cases of vertical transmission among the mother child pairs studied.

The PMTCT Programme in SERHA is therefore having a marked impact in preventing vertical transmission and is recording transmission rates below 2 percent. Jamaica could therefore meet the goal of eliminating Mother to Child transmission if the programme from the SERHA could be fully implemented island wide with scale up of family planning and other support and prevention interventions.

Keywords: Kevin Mark Harvey; Antiretroviral Therapy; HIV/AIDS; Syphilis, SERHA.