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Abstract

TUPE0806 - Dreams and desires: exploring the sexual and reproductive choices of HIV positive men and women - a qualitative perspective

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Issues: With increasing access to ARV treatment, acknowledging and responding to the sexual and reproductive health (SRH) choices and desires of PLHIV is vital for policy and programme reform. Yet, little is known about the fertility desires and SRH perspectives of PLHIV.

Description: IPPF, collaborating with GNP+, undertook qualitative research into the experiences of HIV positive fathers around the world. This highlighted the complexity of parenting for a range of fathers. It showed how they play a pivotal role in the lives and health of their children and families, and how HIV had shaped these relationships. A separate study with ICW analyzed the fertility desires of HIV positive women. These two studies emphasise a number of areas neglected in our response to date.

Lessons learned:

1. Increased parenting in the age of AIDS: PLHIV increasingly face decisions on parenting – yet their status creates additional challenges and difficulties.
2. Policy Gaps and Policy Champions: A lack of attention to the SRH needs of PLHIV leads to stigmatisation and denial of essential services. Yet, key HIV positive individuals are acting as champions for policy change, and also as role models in their communities.
3. Stigma and Discrimination is becoming more subtle: HIV positive fathers play a central role in their children's lives, yet the stigma they face is a disabling factor (e.g. denial of access). HIV positive women also face a range of hurdles in accessing SRH services (e.g. health care provider attitudes).
4. Status and Disclosure: Disclosing their HIV status is a turning point for many people, in how they view themselves, and how they are viewed by their children

Recommendations: Action is needed to ensure HIV/AIDS responses acknowledge and address the SRH needs and desires of PLHIV. This should include an emphasis on choice; addressing provider attitudes and biases and the importance of positive prevention.