BACKGROUND:

HIV in South Africa
- South Africa has the largest global epidemic with 1 in 4 HIV positive individuals
- 7.1 million people living with HIV
- 19% of adults 15-49 years infected
- The province of KwaZulu-Natal is the most heavily burdened

Men & HIV
- Many HIV prevention services specifically support women and girls, gaps exist in HIV prevention, testing and treatment services targeting men and boys.
- Men are less likely to get tested for HIV than women.
- Many positive individuals taking PrEP.

Men who have sex with men and sex workers.
- Men experience higher mortality attributable to HIV compared to women.

OBJECTIVE:
- To determine men’s perspectives on their female partners taking PrEP.

METHODS:

- Men identified at community settings with a trained Zulu speaking male research assistant
- Confidential and anonymous interviews in Zulu.
- Interviews recorded, translated and transcribed and then coded to identify themes.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Characteristics of young male respondents in rural South Africa (n=31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median age</td>
<td>26 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>7 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed high school</td>
<td>16 (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of STI</td>
<td>16 (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary long term partner</td>
<td>27 (87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other long term partner</td>
<td>26 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of lifetime partners</td>
<td>12 (38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever tested for HIV</td>
<td>26 (84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tested for HIV within the last 3 months</td>
<td>10 (32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about acquiring HIV</td>
<td>19 (61)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS / SIGNIFICANCE:

In rural, highly HIV-prevalent KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, we found that young heterosexual men are aware of and acknowledge their high HIV-risk behavior, continue to engage in these behaviors, and recognize the value of PrEP for themselves and their partners.

- Potential barriers to PrEP implementation among young heterosexual men in rural South Africa include perceived HIV stigma and mistrust between partners.

- HIV prevention strategies must account for the complex dynamics of sexual relationships among men and women in rural resource limited settings.

- The potential for risk compensation among men and women in resource-limited settings needs monitoring as PrEP is widely implemented.

NEXT STEPS:

- Gender specific resources and services may be helpful to ensure men are not left behind. Potential strategies include:
  - HIV prevention education designed specifically to engage men.
  - Interventions designed to modify gender norms and reduce risk behaviors, such as skill-building to facilitate communication between partners.

- Scaling up HIV prevention programs will require interventions that facilitate both partner discussion and addressing perceived stigma.

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