Knowledge of HIV-positive status among adult people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Eswatini: a population-based survey

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BACKGROUND
HIV testing is the entry point to HIV prevention and treatment. The first-90 of the global 90-90-90 targets seeks 90% of PLHIV to know their status by 2020. Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) has 220,000 PLHIV but lacks a population-based first-90 estimate. We used the 2016-17 Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey2 (SHIMS2) to describe and determine factors associated with knowledge of HIV seropositive (HIV+) status among adults aged 15+.

METHODS
- SHIMS2 was a cross-sectional, nationally representative, population-based, two-stage randomized cluster-sampled household survey.
- Knowledge of HIV+ status was defined as tested positive by rapid HIV test and responded to be HIV+ prior to testing during face to face interviews.
- Frequencies, weighted proportions, Chi-square (Chi2) and logistic regression analyses stratified by sex using Jackknife variance estimation were conducted using STATA 14.
- Potential factors were analyzed in two domains: socio-demographic and behavioral.
- Adjusted odds ratios (aORs) with 95% confidence intervals (CI) were reported.

RESULTS
- Of the 13,339 adult participants enrolled, 7,413 (55.6%) were females. Median age was 32 [IQR:23-48] (females) and 30 [21-43] years (males).
- Response rate was 92.5% for females and 84.4% for males. Figure 1 shows the number and weighted percent of respondents to HIV testing, those tested HIV+, and those responded to be HIV+ prior to testing.
- Among respondents, 32.5% of females and 20.4% of males were confirmed HIV+, and among those, 88.6% of females and 77.5% of males responded to be HIV+ prior to testing.
- More females knew their HIV+ status than males (Chi2 p-value (p) <0.001).

Factors associated with knowledge of HIV seropositive status (Table 1)
- For both females and males, awareness of HIV+ status was more likely among those who:
  - Reported using condom at last sex
  - Reported previous visit to tuberculosis (TB) clinics
  - Were aged 25-49 compared to those aged 15-24 years old
- Among females, HIV+ status awareness was more likely among those who:
  - Reported to have previously visited antenatal care clinics
  - Were ever pregnant
- Among males, HIV+ status awareness was more likely among those who:
  - Were married and those who were divorced
  - Resided in rural areas

CONCLUSION
- In Eswatini, females are close to reaching the first-90 whilst males are >10% behind.
- Providing male-friendly, male-targeted services should be spearheaded in order to unlock more testing opportunities required to bridge this gap and achieve the first-90.
- Females may provide the gateway to reach males by reaching their partners through index testing.

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