

Herpes simplex virus type 2 infection among young uncircumcised men in Kisumu, Kenya

Abstract:

To identify factors associated with herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) infection among men aged 18-24 in Kisumu, Kenya. **METHODS:** Baseline data from a randomised trial of male circumcision were analysed. Participants were interviewed for sociodemographic and behavioural risks. The outcome was HSV-2 by antibody status. Risk factors were considered singly and in combination through logistic regression models. **RESULTS:** Among 2771 uncircumcised men, 766 (27.6%; 95% confidence interval (CI) 26.0% to 29.3%) tested antibody positive for HSV-2. The median age at first sex was 16 years, and the median number of lifetime sexual partners was four. HSV-2 seroprevalence increased from 19% among 18-year-olds to 43% among 24-year-olds ($p < 0.001$). In multivariable analysis, statistically significant risks for infection were increasing age (adjusted odds ratio (AOR) = 1.22-2.58), being married or having a live-in female partner (AOR = 1.80; 95% CI 1.28 to 2.53), preferring "dry" sex (AOR = 1.39; 95% CI 1.14 to 1.69), reported penile cuts or abrasions during sex (AOR = 1.58; 95% CI 1.32 to 1.91), increasing lifetime sex partners (multiple response categories; AORs ranging from 1.65 to 1.97), and non-student occupation (multiple response categories; AORs ranging from 1.44 to 1.93). Risk decreased with reported condom used at last sex (AOR = 0.82; 95% CI 0.68 to 0.99). **CONCLUSION:** Primary prevention efforts should be initiated at an early age. The same behavioural interventions used currently for HIV prevention-abstinence, reducing the number of sex partners and increasing condom use-should be effective for HSV-2 prevention.