

A randomized, placebo-controlled trial of monthly azithromycin prophylaxis to prevent sexually transmitted infections and HIV-1 in Kenyan sex workers: study design and baseline findings

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Abstract:

Our objectives were to describe the baseline findings of a trial of antibiotic prophylaxis to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV-1 in a cohort of Nairobi female sex workers (FSWs). A questionnaire was administered and a medical examination was performed. HIV-negative women were randomly assigned to either one gram azithromycin or placebo monthly. Mean age of the 318 women was 32 years, mean duration of sex work 7 years and mean number of clients was 4 per day. High-risk behaviour was frequent: 14% practised anal intercourse, 23% sex during menses, and 3% used intravenous drugs. While 20% reported condom use with all clients, 37% never use condoms. However, STI prevalence was relatively low: HIV-1 27%, bacterial vaginosis 46%, *Trichomonas vaginalis* 13%, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* 8%, *Chlamydia trachomatis* 7%, syphilis 6% and cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) 3%. It appears feasible to access a population of high-risk FSWs in Nairobi with prevention programmes, including a proposed trial of HIV prevention through STI chemoprophylaxis