

Subtype C is associated with increased vaginal shedding of HIV-1.

Abstract:

The prevalence of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-1-infected cells and HIV-1 RNA levels in genital secretions and breast milk and the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV-1 were compared among subtypes A, C, and D in a Kenyan cohort. Pregnant women infected with subtype C were significantly more likely to shed HIV-1-infected vaginal cells than were those infected with subtype A or D (odds ratio [OR], 3.6 [95% confidence interval {CI}, 1.4-8.8]; $P = .006$). This relationship held after adjusting for age, CD4 cell count, and plasma HIV-1 RNA load (OR, 3.1 [95% CI, 1.1-8.6]; $P = .03$). These observations suggest that HIV-1 subtype influences mucosal shedding of HIV-1.