

Challenges of Identifying High Risk Women for Microbicide Studies in Malawi

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Introduction

- In this presentation we will discuss why and how it is difficult to identify a woman in the 'normal' definition of high risk.
 - HIV prevalence
 - Contraceptive uptake
 - Definition of risk

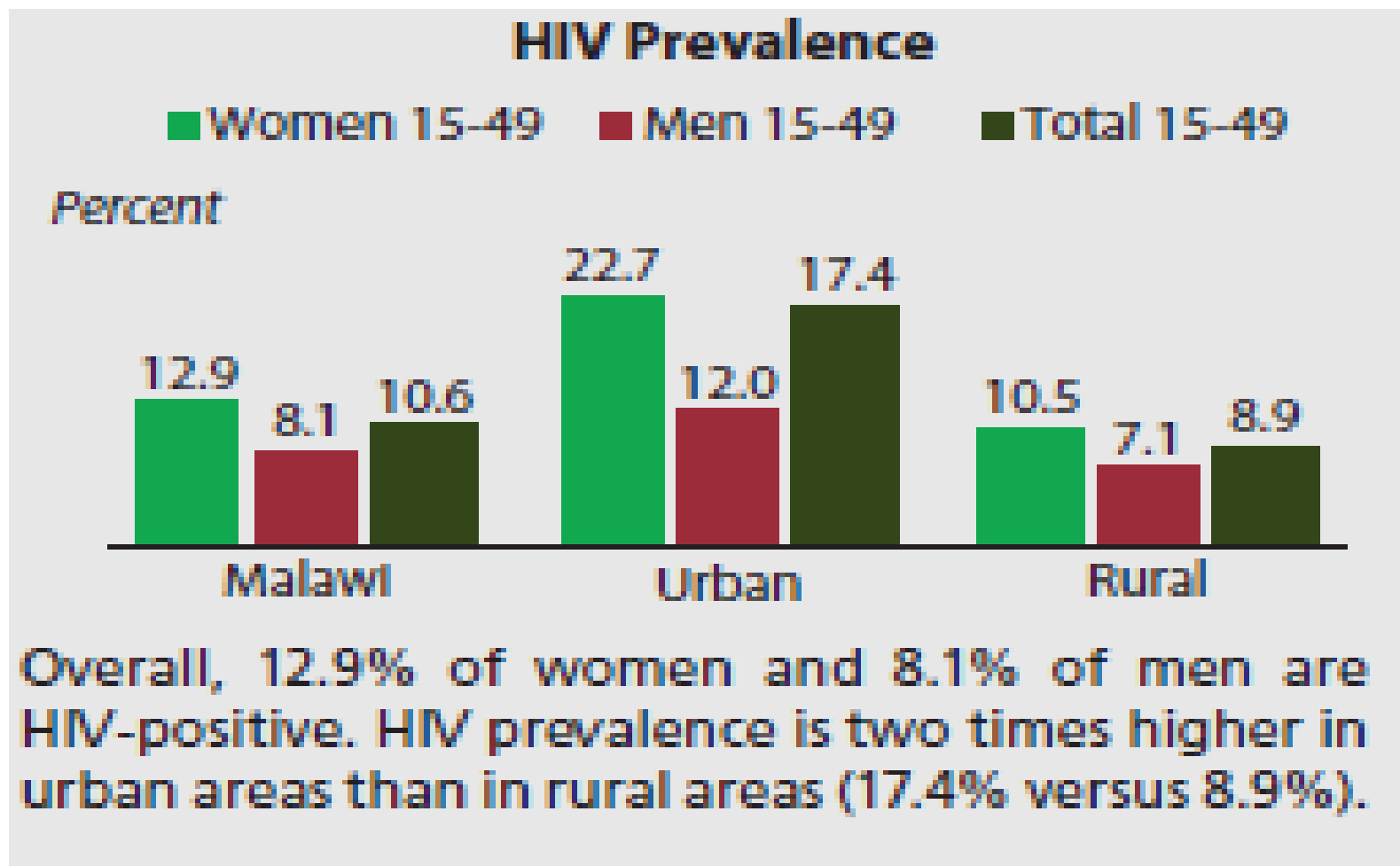
How to identify potential participants for MTN studies?

1. *Inclusion criteria & Exclusion criteria*

- *Using an effective method of contraception.*
- *Sexually active*
- *Not pregnant or breastfeeding*

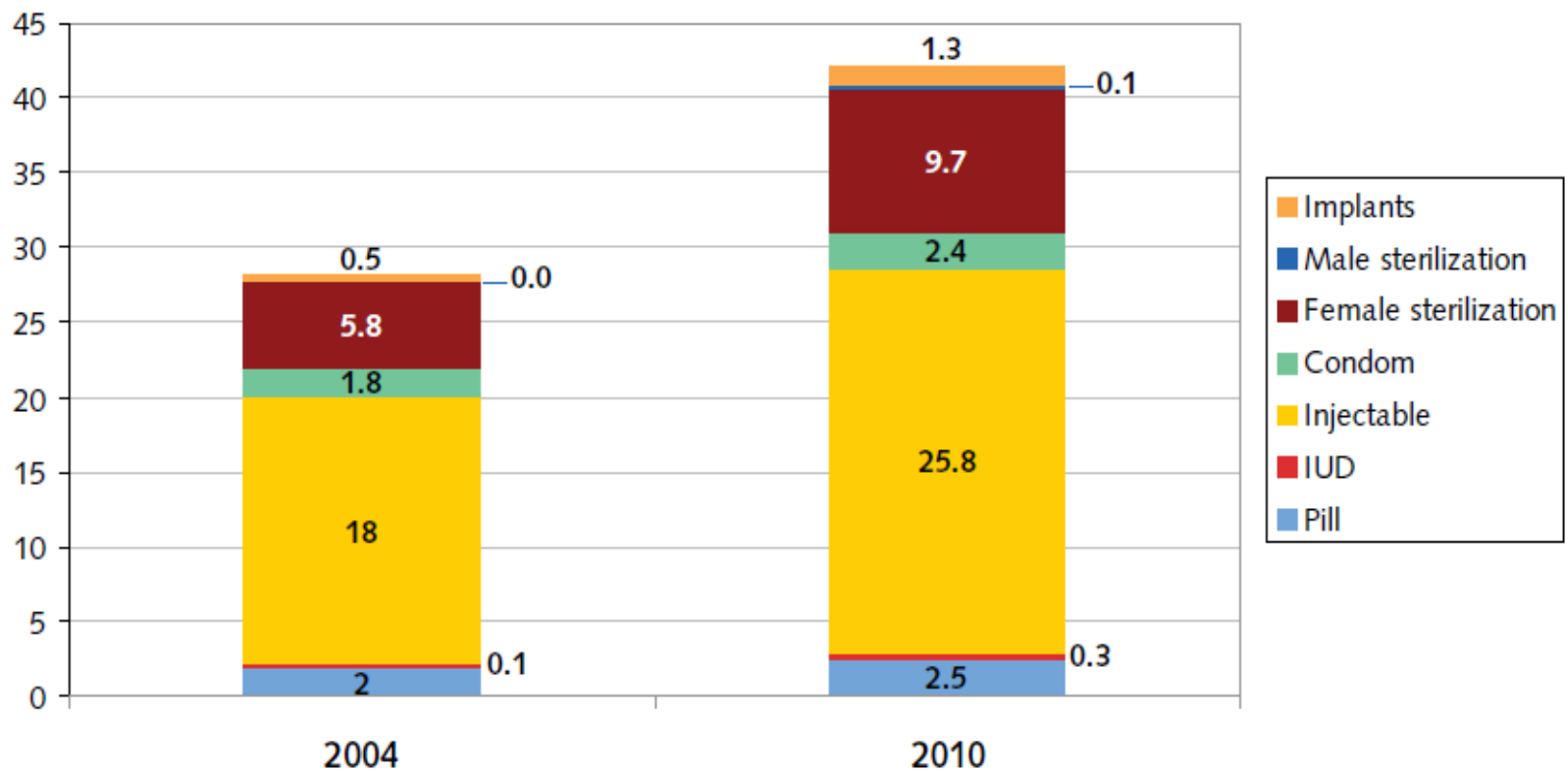
2. *Women who are at risk?*

HIV Prevalence in Malawi



Contraceptive uptake

FIGURE 1. CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE RATE AND METHOD MIX IN MALAWI, 2004 AND 2010



Source: NSO and ICF Macro. 2011.



Definition of High risk

Any person having sexual intercourse without the use of a condom.

- Multiple sex partners
- Low use of condoms
- HIV status (known/unknown)
- Lack of empowerment
- Low/No Literacy and knowledge
- Absolute poverty
- Culture - earlier sexual debut, initiation ceremonies
- Wealth – (male or female)

HIV Prevalence by sexual behaviour

Malawi DHS 2010

Table 14.7 HIV prevalence by sexual behaviour

Percentage HIV positive among women and men age 15-49 who ever had sex and were tested for HIV, by sexual behaviour characteristics, Malawi 2010

Sexual behaviour characteristic	Women		Men		Total	
	Percentage HIV positive	Number	Percentage HIV positive	Number	Percentage HIV positive	Number
Age at first sexual intercourse						
<16	16.6	2,181	8.4	1,993	12.7	4,173
16-17	14.4	1,752	9.5	958	12.6	2,710
18-19	10.8	1,199	10.7	1,116	10.7	2,315
20+	12.2	635	9.1	1,379	10.0	2,014
Missing	18.7	400	12.6	95	17.5	494
Multiple sexual partners and partner concurrency in past 12 months						
0	24.7	831	4.9	783	15.1	1,614
1	12.7	5,262	9.7	4,137	11.4	9,400
2+	31.8	64	11.8	614	13.7	678
Had concurrent partners ¹	*	26	12.1	482	13.5	508
No sexual partners were concurrent	(26.6)	38	10.5	132	14.1	170
Missing	*	8	*	7	*	15
Condom use						
Ever used a condom	20.3	1,292	11.8	3,183	14.3	4,475
Never used a condom	13.0	4,865	5.8	2,345	10.6	7,210
Missing	*	9	*	13	(16.6)	21
Condom use at last sexual intercourse in past 12 months						
Used condom	29.1	509	13.9	962	19.2	1,471
Did not use condom	11.2	4,816	9.0	3,785	10.3	8,602
No sexual intercourse in past 12 months	24.4	839	4.8	789	14.9	1,628
Missing	*	1	*	5	*	6

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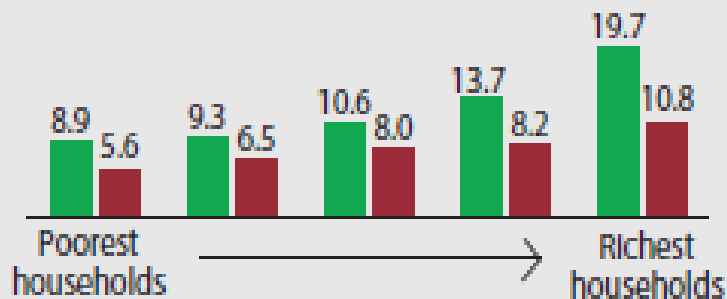
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HIV prevalence by wealth and education

HIV Prevalence by Household Wealth Quintile

■ Women 15-49 ■ Men 15-49

Percent

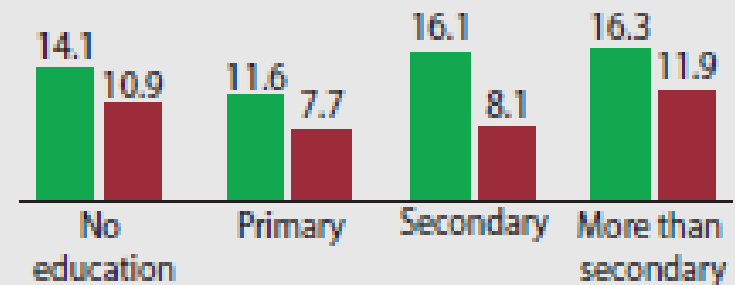


HIV prevalence increases with household wealth among women and men.

HIV Prevalence by Education

■ Women 15-49 ■ Men 15-49

Percent



Among men, HIV prevalence is highest among those with no education or those with more than secondary education. HIV prevalence is highest among women with higher levels of education (secondary or more than secondary).



Discussion

- With a high HIV prevalence across the country, we can assume that a good majority of the adult population are at risk, regardless of the age groups, marital status, or wealth quintiles, etc.
- To screen a sex worker over a housewife into MTN 020 cannot be justified, as both are at risk.
- Amidst the high HIV prevalence at the sites in Malawi, a good proportion of HIV uninfected woman are being identified and can benefit from Microbicide studies



Conclusion

- Defining high risk for HIV transmission is difficult.



References

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Acknowledgement

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