

Partnership Dynamics and Dual Method Use among Adolescent Girls and Young Women in South Africa: A Longitudinal Analysis of HIV Prevention Trials Network 068 Data

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BACKGROUND

- In South Africa, adolescent girls account for nearly 80% of all new adolescent HIV infections and 65% report an unintended pregnancy before the age of 25.
- Dual method use is known as the most reliable protection against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Yet, uptake of dual method use in South Africa remains low, with estimates ranging from 6% to 17%.
- Understanding how partner characteristics and relationship dynamics impact AGYW dual method use might explain low uptake beyond individual and environmental factors.

METHODS

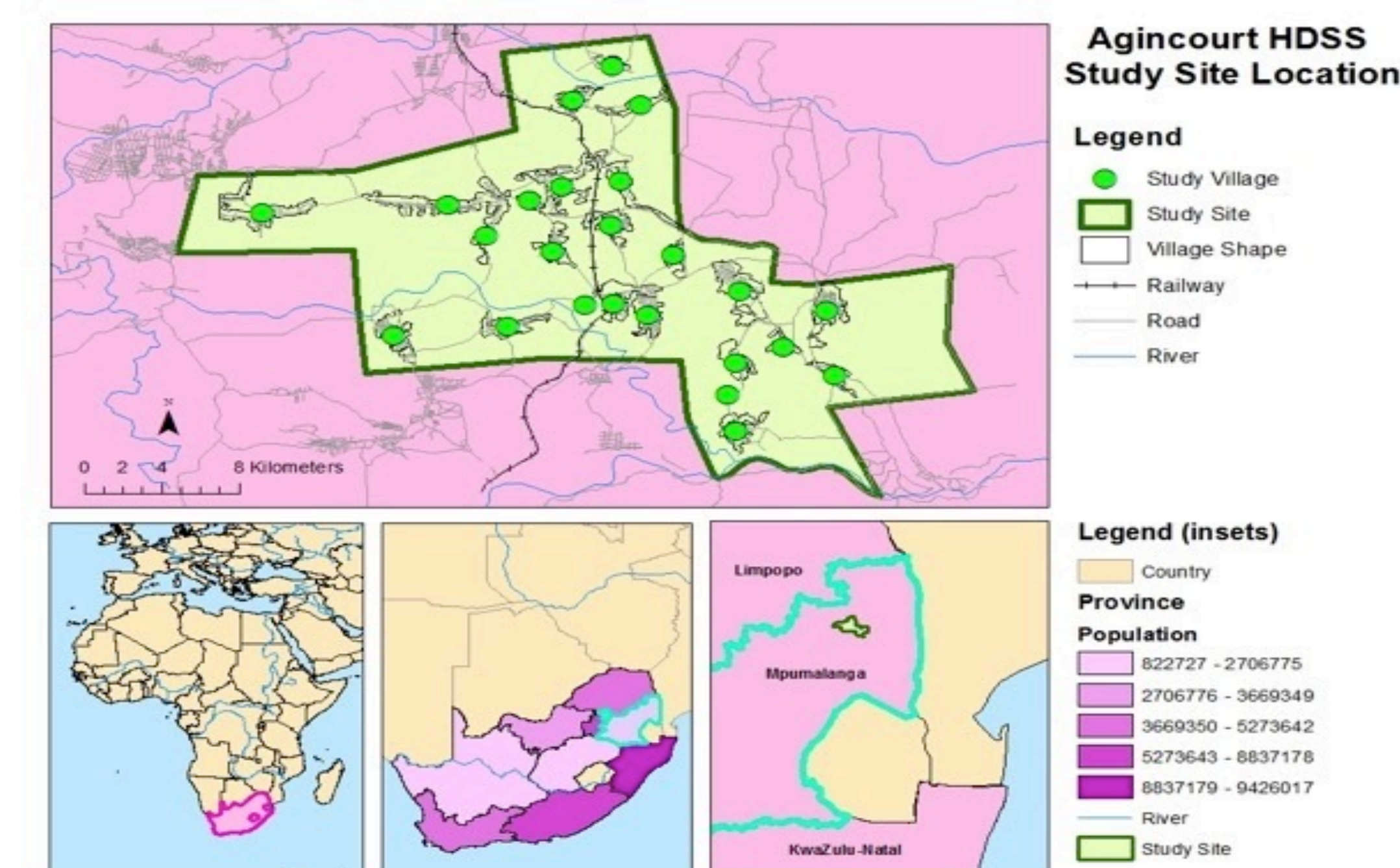
- Longitudinal data are from the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 068 study, a conditional cash transfer study of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), age 13-20 in rural South Africa. A total of 2452 HIV- AGYW were followed for up to six years.
- Separate log-linked binomial regression models with generalized estimating equations were used to calculate adjusted risk ratios and 95% confidence intervals for the association between partner characteristics, relationship dynamics, and dual method use. Exposures were lagged by one time point.
- Partner characteristics included being greater than 5 years older than their AGYW partner, engaging in concurrent partnerships, HIV+ status, and provision of financial support. Relationship dynamics included high relationship power, high gender equitable norms, intimate partner violence, and condom use communication. Dual use was defined as concurrently using a hormonal contraceptive method and condoms.

Positive Relationship Dynamics and Partner HIV Status Disclosure are Important For Dual Method Use Among Adolescent Girls and Young Women

Table 1. Partner Characteristics, Relationship Dynamics, and Dual Use

	aRR	95 % CI
<u>Partner Characteristics</u>		
5 Years Older	0.97	(0.64 , 1.47)
Has Concurrent Partners	1.13	(0.77 , 1.63)
Provides Financial Support	1.23	(0.64 , 2.35)
Percieved HIV+ Status	1.48*	(1.13 , 1.93)
<u>Relationship Dynamics</u>		
No Intimate Partner Violence	1.22*	(1.03 , 2.44)
High Relationship Power	1.48*	(1.08 , 2.19)
High Gender Equitable Norms	1.08	(0.85 , 1.37)
Discussed Condom Use	1.27	(0.72 , 2.25)

*p < 0.05



RESULTS

- At baseline, more than half of the entire sample (N = 2542) reported that it was very important to not be pregnant (N = 1520, 62%) and that they had no chance of getting HIV in their lifetime (N = 1795, 73%). Among those who were sexually active (N = 650, 27%), 10% (N = 64) were using only condoms, 20% (N= 133) were using only hormonal methods, and 13% (N = 87) were using dual methods. At the final study visit, 61% (N = 1227) were sexually active and 15% (N = 189) were using dual methods.
- After controlling for pregnancy intention and covariates, we found knowing a partner's HIV-positive status (aRR: 1.48, 95% CI: 1.13, 1.93), high relationship power (aRR: 1.48, 95% CI: 1.08, 2.19), and experiencing no IPV in the past year (aRR: 1.22, 95% CI: 1.03, 2.44) to predict dual use.

CONCLUSION

- Partner characteristics and relationship dynamics are important for dual method use among AGYW. Interventions to help AGYW navigate partnership dynamics and safely engage male partners in HIV status disclosure could be beneficial for both HIV and pregnancy prevention.

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