

# Characterizing Strategies to Prevent Mother to Child HIV Transmission Among Female Sex Workers in the Eastern Cape

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# Outline

- Background & Rationale
- Study Aims
- Methods
- Current Project Status
- Future Directions

# Background & Rationale

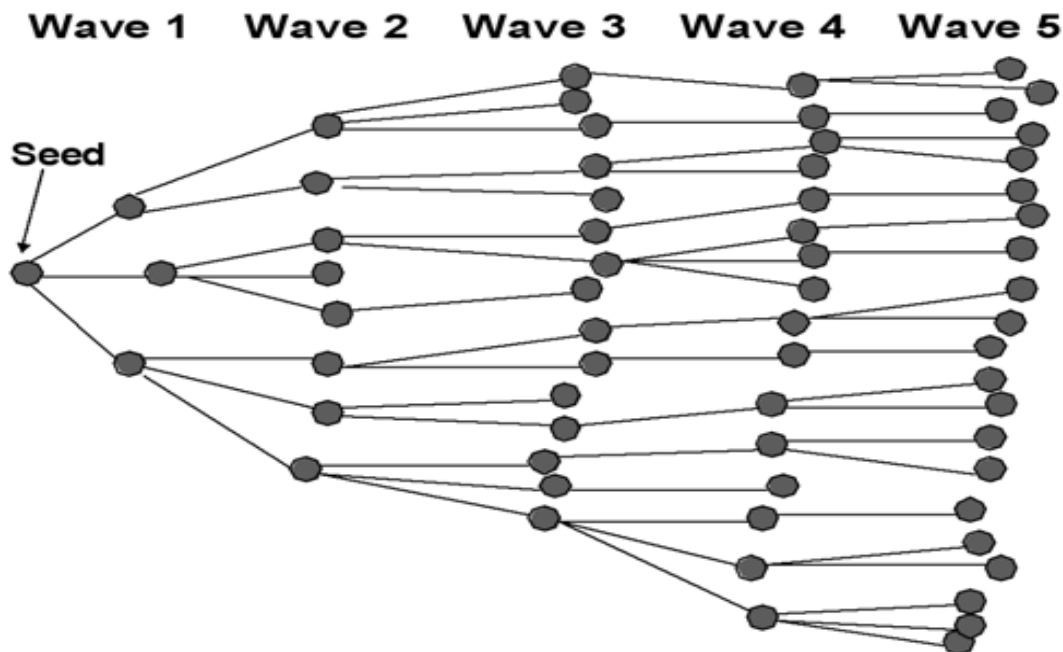
- Research consistently shows female sex workers (FSW) are disproportionately affected by HIV
  - Estimated HIV prevalence among FSW in South Africa: ~60%<sup>1,3,4</sup>
- Barriers may exist that prevent access and uptake of health services, particularly HIV treatment and PMTCT services among FSW<sup>1,3</sup>
  - Geographic
  - Experienced or feared stigma and discrimination
- Lack of reliable data on FSW in general in the Eastern Cape, as well as HIV burden and gaps in engagement in PMTCT among this population

# Study Aims

- Characterize risks for HIV transmission from mother to child among FSW in Port Elizabeth within three phases: pre-conception, pregnancy, and postpartum [24 months]
  - HIV prevalence
  - Uptake of PMTCT-related services (barriers to care, areas for prevention interventions)
  - Sex work during pregnancy
  - Reproductive health history
  - Risk state for STI transmission (gaps in service provisioning, screening practices, individual behaviors and knowledge, structural risk factors)
- Measure severity of HIV infection among HIV-positive FSW

# Methods

- Cross-sectional study, mixed methods
- Data collection: September-December 2014
- *Quantitative Phase*
  - Respondent-drive Sampling (RDS)
    - Aiming to recruit **420 FSW**



# Methods (cont.)

- *Quantitative Phase (cont.)*
  - Questionnaire
  - Biological testing/ Referral to care
    - TB/HIV Care Association
    - HIV Rapid Tests, POC CD4, viral load (pregnant/breastfeeding subset only), syphilis, pregnancy, TB, syndromic exam and management of other STIs
- *Qualitative Phase*
  - In-depth interviews: FSW, Healthcare workers, Key Informants
    - **N=45 FSW, 16 HCW, 10 KI**
  - Focus Group Discussions
    - **N= 50 FSW**

# Current Project Status

- Projected start date, September 1, 2014
- Community Engagement
  - TB/HIV Care Mobile Clinic Outreach
  - Community Advisory Board Meetings
- Stakeholder Engagement



Social science that makes a difference



High Transmission Area (HTA)  
Programme



# Future Directions

- Intended as a pilot study to provide some reliable epidemiologic data on the FSW population in Port Elizabeth
- Aim is for this data to inform larger cohort FSW study in the Eastern Cape in near future
  - Longitudinal study
  - Intervention



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