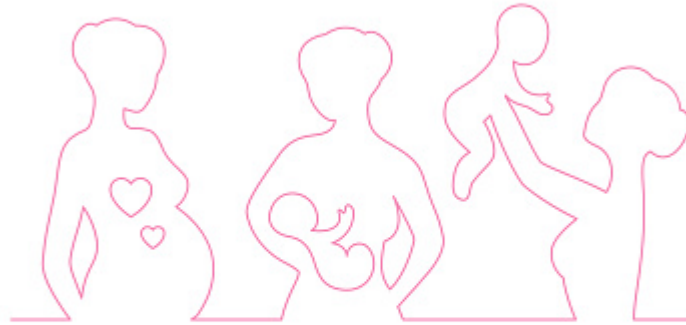


# HIV Prevention Research for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women: Why it matters

## Pregnancy and breastfeeding and HIV risk



**Lee Fairlie, MBChB, FCPaeds, MMED  
(Paeds)**

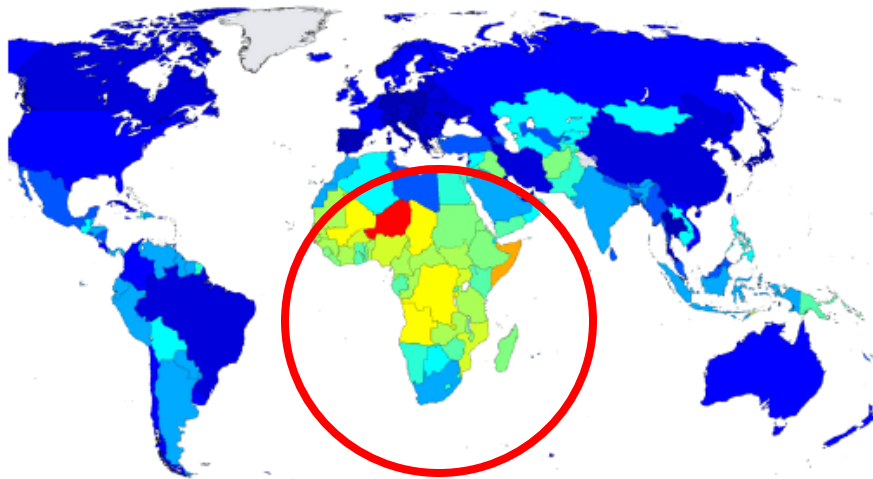
**DELIVER Co-Chair,**

**Wits RHI Shandukani CRS Leader**

# What do we know well?

(1) Countries where women have high fertility (several babies) and long breastfeeding periods also have high HIV prevalence.

Total fertility rate



■ <2 → ■ 5.5 to 6

Adult HIV prevalence - 2017



■ <1% → ■ >10%

# What do we know well?

**South Africa: about 7.1 million people living with HIV**

**(2) Women are at higher risk of acquiring HIV than men.**

–In South Africa... women 20-24 years of age have a 3 times higher prevalence of HIV than men

–In South Africa women of child bearing potential (15-49) are twice as likely to be HIV-infected than men of a similar age

# What do we know well?

## (3) Women spend a significant part of their lifetime pregnant or breastfeeding

	Malawi	South Africa	Uganda	Zimbabwe
Average life expectancy (years)	60	66	64	62
Total fertility rate	5	2.3	5.7	3.9
Years pregnant or breastfeeding per pregnancy	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Total time pregnant or breastfeeding (years)	About 9	About 4	About 10	About 7
Percentage of lifetime	15%	6%	16%	11%
Percentage of reproductive years	26%	12%	29%	20%

# What do we know well?

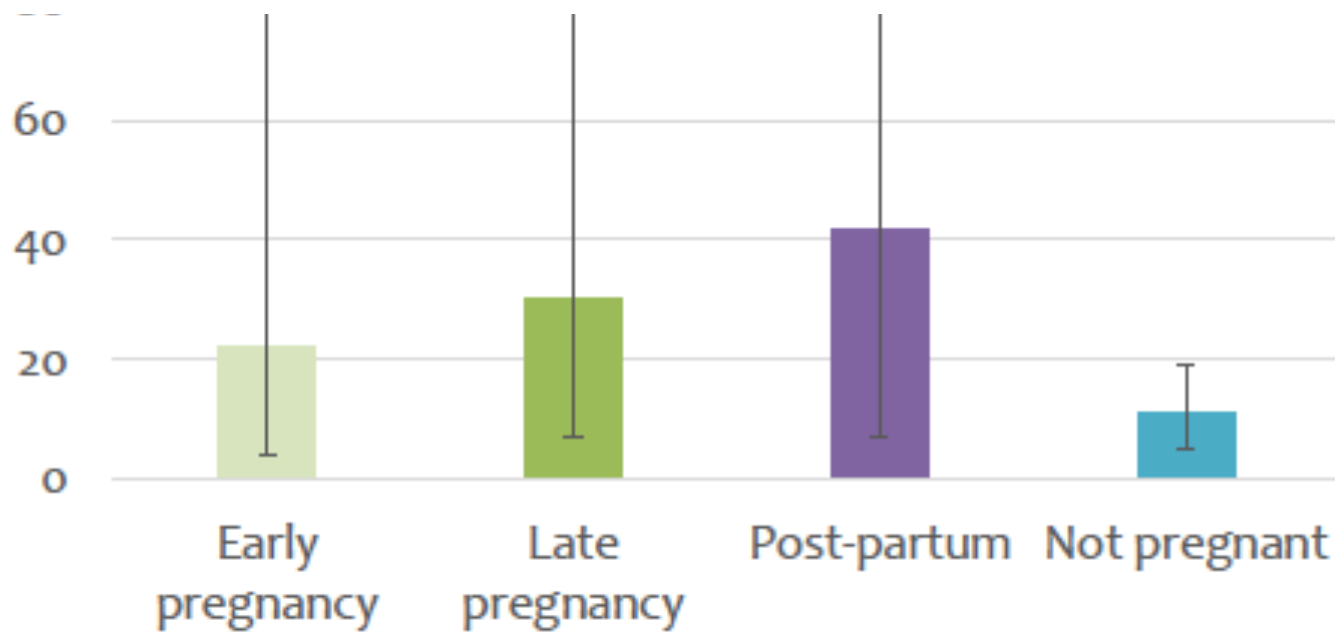
**(4) South Africa adopts a treat-all approach and > 95% of HIV+ women access ART.....despite this 12,000 new infant infections in 2016**

- If a woman gets HIV during pregnancy or breastfeeding, she is **2 to 3 times** more likely to give her baby HIV than if she got HIV before she was pregnant
- Best way to avoid mother to child transmission of HIV is to **prevent infection in the woman** in the first place.

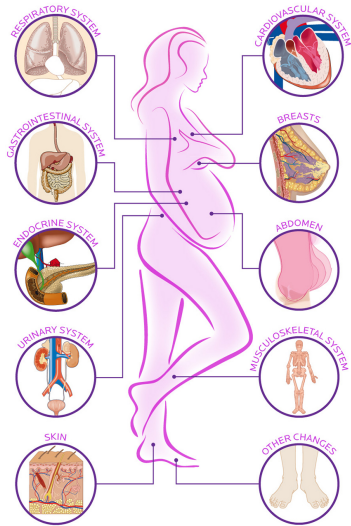
# What does recent research show us?

- Compared to a when a woman is not-pregnant, her risk of getting HIV is **2-3 times** greater during **pregnancy**.
- Compared to when a woman is not pregnant, her risk of getting HIV is **4 times greater** during **breastfeeding**.
- Overall, about **1/3 new HIV infections** in women happen during late pregnancy or breastfeeding
- When a woman is at higher risk for HIV, so is her baby.

# Increased risk of HIV-1 acquisition



# Why do we think this is?



- Body undergoes many changes during pregnancy and breastfeeding

## *Social issues...*

- Pregnant women may face more challenges when negotiating condoms with partners.
- In some cases, male partners of pregnant/ breastfeeding women have more sex partners outside of the relationship, adding to HIV risk
- Sometimes women have sex partners outside of their primary relationship
- Increases in partner violence during pregnancy/bf may contribute to an increased risk of HIV transmission.



# Take Home Messages

- Women have a **2-4 times higher risk** for getting HIV while pregnant/breastfeeding
- Women in South Africa spend **4 years** of their lives pregnant or breastfeeding
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women need...
  - HIV prevention tools that they know are safe for them and their babies (PMTCT agenda)
  - HIV testing throughout pregnancy (beyond 1st trimester) and after
- Without strategies for pregnant and breastfeeding women, control of HIV epidemic will be difficult.

# Acknowledgements

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