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Abstract category: C19 Interventions to prevent mother-to-child transmission

Optional category: D47 Food security, poverty and HIV/AIDS

Abstract title: Early weaning: a challenge for mothers in Burkina Faso

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Abstract text: **Background:** PMTCT programs recommend that HIV+ mothers use either formula feeding or exclusive breastfeeding with early weaning. In countries such as Burkina Faso, where median breastfeeding duration is 24,5 months, procurement of replacement food is a new challenge that mothers must handle. Difficulties met by mothers and factors that determine their feeding practices are not perfectly known concerning this perilous infant feeding transition, in a context where kwashiorkor and marasmus at weaning are still common in general population. **Methods:** : 25 women included in National PMTCT Program in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso were interviewed about infant feeding practices when their babies were about 3 months and 1 year-old, as part of a qualitative research project on determinants of HIV transmission through breastfeeding (ANRS 1271). **Results:** The choice of infant food is orientated by PMTCT counselling, by advice given in nutritional rehabilitation centres and by cultural patterns. It is also driven by the availability of various types of food according to family's financial capacity. Many mothers start a "quest for food" that ends with various feeding patterns, which will be presented. Women must negotiate between various kinds of advice and knowledge they get about nutritional needs, economical constraints, social opportunities and social constraints like the risk of being criticised when applying an unusual feeding pattern to their child. Their ability to do so depends on strategies such as building relationships with community-based organisations to be informed when supplies are available, trying several kinds of food, maintaining confidentiality, getting support in health facilities... These strategies and their social impact for mothers will be discussed. **Conclusions:** These results will help define the content of infant feeding counselling and support, and assess the need for complementary food that might be provided by programs or projects in such a context.

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