

Abstract Preview

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

Optional category: D1 Gender inequalities, partners and relationships

Abstract title: **Fathers' attitudes and roles in prevention of HIV transmission through breastfeeding in Africa: insights from Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso**

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Abstract text: **Background:** Most PMTCT programs try to develop fathers' involvement for women's support. Moreover, PMTCT+ programs are a mean for fathers to get access to diagnosis and care. But in most programs, results are far from expected in terms of men's response. Fathers' reactions are not very well understood.

Methods: Narratives of 30 women included in national PMTCT program in Yaounde, Cameroon, 30 women included in DITRAME PLUS ANRS 1201/1202 project in Abidjan, Ivory Coast and 30 women included in national PMTCT program and Kesho Bora study in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso were analysed, as a part of a qualitative research project on social and cultural factors for prevention of HIV transmission through breastfeeding (ANRS 1271). Topics were related to fathers' attitudes at several stages of mothers' postnatal follow-up.

Results: Fathers' role is a core issue for infant feeding. Their decision about infant feeding is essential for economic reasons. Moreover, their decision is respected by the whole family, making it easy or difficult for women to comply with preventive infant feeding options. We observed diversity in fathers' roles and attitudes, which are related to (i) fathers' attitude regarding their partners, from support to rejection, (ii) their attitude regarding their own status, from ignorance to knowledge, (iii) their attitude regarding information sharing with their partner, from lying to openness, (iv) their attitude towards health professionals, from direct relationship to avoidance, (v) their perception regarding preventive options, from confidence to anxiety. Five main patterns occur, combining these aspects, that affect relationship with mothers: rejection, avoidant support, concealing support, care sharing, full involvement. For each of these patterns, a model role will be described.

Conclusions: The use of this typology of attitudes and roles in prevention will be discussed in order to adapt discourses towards fathers in PMTCT programs.

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