



Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Testing among Childbearing Aged Women: who is at risk?

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INTRODUCTION

Although prenatal HIV infections are declining, many women of childbearing age are unaware of their HIV status. HIV testing before or during the early stages of pregnancy is a critical first step to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission. The aim of this study was to estimate prevalence of unknown HIV status and to explore its associated risk factors among childbearing aged women.

METHODOLOGY

Responses were analyzed from 74,607 adult women of childbearing age (18-44) who participated in the 2012 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Women who answered "No" to the BRFSS question: "Have you ever been tested for HIV?" were classified as women with unknown HIV status. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests and logistic regression were done using SAS Proc Survey (SAS Institute, Cary, NC, USA), to account for BRFSS's multistage complex survey design and sample weights.

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RESULTS

Overall, 45% (95% Confidence Interval [CI]: 44.4-45.8) of women have never been tested for HIV. Of these women, 37% were 18-24 years old, 69% non-Hispanic White, 31% unemployed, 21.8% had no health coverage, 3.5% high risk behavior, 43.2% income more than \$50,000 and 38.9% of them had less than high school diploma. After controlling for cofounders, those with no health coverage (OR=0.87, 95% CI: 0.8-0.9), less education (OR=0.84, 95% CI: 0.77-0.92), more income (OR=0.65, 95% CI= 0.57-0.73) as well as those who were non-Hispanic White (OR=0.8, 95% CI: 0.73-0.88) and younger (OR=0.41, 95% CI: 0.37-0.46) were significantly less likely to take HIV test. Having no insurance, less education, more income, being non-Hispanic White, and younger are significantly associated with unknown HIV status among women of childbearing age. Our findings highlight the need to continue provider and consumer education to provide access to routine HIV screening to all women, regardless of age, race and socio-economic status.

Figure 1. Prevalence of HIV Testing among Childbearing Aged Women

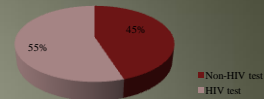


Table 1. Results of logistic regression: Odds ratios for taking

Factors	HIV test		P Value
	Odds ratio	95% Confidence interval	
Age			
18-24 years old	0.41	0.37-0.46	0.03
Race			
Non-Hispanic White	0.8	0.73-0.88	<0.001
Insurance			
No Insurance	0.87	0.80-0.9	0.04
Education			
<high school	0.84	0.77-0.92	<0.01
Income			
>\$50,000	0.65	0.57-0.73	<0.01

FUTURE IMPLICATION

These data highlight the need to continue provider and consumer education to provide access to routine HIV screening to all childbearing aged women in the United States. Our findings show that odds of non-HIV test is highest among women who had less education indicating that efforts to effectively prevent HIV need to focus on promoting education.