

In-depth Interview Guide – Month 12 interview

Qualitative component: Exploring HIV self-testing experiences among HIV-1 uninfected men and women.

Target group: HIV uninfected partners enrolled in the Partners HIV Self-testing Project in Thika

Objectives:

1. Learn opinions of HIV uninfected partners on HIV self-testing and PrEP use.
2. Gain an understanding of how participants performed the HIV self-test including any challenges experienced.
3. Gain an understanding of participants' experience visiting the health clinic only every 6 months for PrEP delivery.
4. Understand how participants are coping with COVID-19 and the impact of COVID-19 on their HIV care.

INTRODUCTION

Ice breaker.

You have been in the study for the last 12 months, how has your experience been?

Topic 1: Acceptability

What do you think about HIV self-testing now? What are the advantages that you know? What are the challenges?

Possible probes:

- What motivated you to take a HIV self-test?
- What are reasons that would make you not perform a HIV self-test?
- Possible concerns with HIV self-testing?
- How do you feel now when you think about testing yourself for HIV?
- How did your partner feel about you performing a HIV self-test?

How do you feel about only visiting the healthcare clinic every 6 months for PrEP delivery?

Possible probes:

- How did you feel between PrEP visits? Did you have any concerns or questions about PrEP use that went unanswered?

[Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new disease that affects the lungs and is spread via droplets in the air. It can spread throughout populations of people easily and can result in difficulties breathing, or in some cases death. It is currently moving throughout Kenya and the entire world, resulting in lockdowns and economic uncertainty.]

How, if at all, has COVID-19 affected your feelings towards HIVST? (If so, probe on how)

How, if at all, has COVID-19 affected your feelings towards PrEP? (If so, probe on how)

Topic 2: Usability

How was your experience in using the HIV self-test?

Possible probes:

- When did you self-test? What reminded you? How many tests did you perform?
- How (easy/difficult) was it to perform a HIV self-test?
- Did anyone assist you to conduct the test? Who? Why?
- How (easy/difficult) was it to read the results? How long did it take you to read the results?
- How did you store your self-test kits? PrEP? Challenges in storage?
- What challenges did you experience in performing the HIV self-test?
- Have you shared with your HIV self-test kits with others? If so who? Why?
- Have you shared your results with others?
- Have you tested others with your HIV self-test kits?
- Have you used the 24 hour helpline?

How, if at all, did the COVID-19 affected your HIV self-test use?

Possible probes:

- Any concerns about testing during COVID-19? Why?
 - Partners concerns about testing during COVID-19? Why? [where partner is aware of HIVST]
- How has COVID -19 affected your ability to maintain privacy and confidentiality during HIV testing? (i.e., during lock down/curfews)
- What do you see as potential advantages or disadvantages with HIV self-test use during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Topic 3: HIV (self-)testing preferences

Self-testing v. clinic testing: What would you prefer, HIV self-testing at home or clinic-based HIV testing?

Possible probes:

- What are your reasons for this preference?
- What are the things that would make you prefer self-testing?
- What are the things that would make you prefer clinic based testing?
- How did you find the quarterly testing schedule?
- What differences did you observe between the first and second time that you tested yourself?

Blood-based v. oral-fluid HIV self-testing: Now that you have used both blood-based and oral-fluid HIV self-testing, which method would you prefer? Why?

- In your opinion, when you compare HIV self-testing using blood and HIV self-testing using oral fluid, is one more accurate than the other?

HIV self-test disclosure: How was it like to tell someone that you used an HIV self-test?

- Was there any difference disclosing results from a self-test than disclosing results from clinic based tests?

Topic 4: PrEP Adherence

Possible probes:

- How has your adherence to PrEP been during the last 6 months? Have you taken all the pills in the 6 bottles?
 - How, if at all, did only seeing a PrEP provider every 6 months affect your PrEP adherence?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your PrEP adherence?
 - Ability to access PrEP? (Did you get any assistance from the clinic on how to access PrEP?)
 - Ability to take PrEP consistently over time? (i.e., PrEP use)
 - Probe on HIV risk perception
- How would you compare the first 6 months of your PrEP use to the last 6 months of your PrEP use?
 - How much of your changes in PrEP use in the last 6 months are because of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How different would your adherence be if you were coming to the clinic every 3 months (versus every 6 months)?
- *[For serodiscordant couples:]* How has your partners' access to ARTs been affected during COVID-19?
- *[For serodiscordant couples:]* How has your partners' ART use been affected during COVID-19?

Topic 5: Sexual Behavior

Possible probes:

- How does sexual behavior change after HIV self-test use and knowledge of HIV status?
 - Condom use? The number of sexual partners? Frequency of sex?
- How has COVID-19 changes affected your access to HIV, STI, and pregnancy prevention interventions (e.g., condoms and/or contraception)?
- How has COVID 19 affected your sexual behavior overall?
 - Number of partners? New partners? Frequency of sex? Condom use? Etc.

Topic 6: COVID-19

- How worried are you about COVID-19 infection?
- Have you made any changes to your lifestyle or daily activities because of COVID-19?
 - Access to work/income
 - Access to health care
 - Access to infection prevention items (masks, soaps/sanitizer)
- Specifically, how has COVID-19 affected you healthcare seeking behaviors?
 - Accessing healthcare when you feel sick?

- Accessing prevention interventions (e.g., contraception, hypertension medications, PrEP, etc.)
- What are some challenges you have faced during COVID-19?
- How has the COVID-19 epidemic affected your overall mood and emotional well-being, including feelings of stress, anxiety, happiness, and sadness?

Topic 6: Closing discussion

Possible probes:

- When people self-test and get a positive result, what are some ways to help them?
 - Help via the phone calls, packaging inserts with helpful messages, etc.
 - What kind of preparation should people have before they self-test to prepare for the results?
- What would make it easier for you or others to perform HIV self-testing?
- Would you consider self-testing for HIV in the future, if so, where would you like to access the self-test kits?
- Would you recommend HIV self-testing to others?
- What suggestions do you have that can help you or others access HIV prevention and contraception during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Would you consider participating in a study that seeks to find treatment or vaccine for COVID-19? Expound.
- Any other thoughts or suggestions or questions on HIV self-testing, PrEP and/or COVID-19 that you would like to share?