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Understanding HIV-positive experiences with antenatal care in Mozambique

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Antenatal care plays a critical role in the health of pregnant women. We carried out a qualitative research to analyse women's compliance to biomedical norms recommended to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV during pregnancy and childbirth in the rural province of Maputo. The study consisted of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with women who had become mothers, in-depth interviews with community health workers and semi-structured interviews with mother and child health nurses. We used Bourdieu's theory of practice as a guiding framework to analyse the data. Our findings showed that participants complied with some recommended biomedical norms to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, such as subsequent antenatal visits, adherence to antiretroviral therapy and childbirth at the health facility. However, they did not comply with the timing of the first antenatal care, use of modern health care system to treat illness episodes and use of condom during pregnancy. The study results suggest, that compliance to the

recommended prevention of mother-to-child transmission is the result of complex interactions in which participants rely on knowledge and resources within both the family and community and the modern health care system. Awareness among health care workers of pregnant women's perspectives as well as an adequate education about the timing of the first antenatal care and the benefits of antenatal care in both the health facility and community could thus enable to improve prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Speaker Biography

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