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The prevalence of unknown human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) status and associated risk factors among pregnant women: Findings from the 2012 behavior risk factors surveillance system (BRFSS)

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Background: Although prenatal HIV infections are declining in the United States, many women of child bearing 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.

Objective: The aim of this study was to estimate prevalence of women with unknown HIV status and to explore the associations between socio-demographic characteristics and HIV testing among pregnant women.

Methodology: Responses were analyzed from 2,873 pregnant women who participated in the 2012 BRFSS. Pregnant women who reported their last HIV test in 2011 and 2012 were classified as women with known HIV status. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests and logistic regression were done using SAS Proc Survey, to account for BRFSS's multistage complex survey design and sample weights.

Results: Overall, 26.8% (95% Confidence Interval [CI]: 23.4-30.2) of pregnant women did not know their HIV status. 9.2% of these women had high risk behaviors, 15% no health coverage, 24.2% were more than 35 years old, 64.4% were non-Hispanic White and 37.8% were college graduates. After controlling for cofounders, pregnant women with more than 35 years old (Odd Ratio [OR] =2.5, 95%CI: 1.4-4.4), self-identify as non-Hispanic White (OR=2.1, 95%CI: 1.2-3.8), no health coverage (OR=2.6, 95%CI: 1.4-4.8), and college degree (OR=1.6, 95%CI: 1.1-2.6) were significantly more likely to be unaware of their HIV status.

Conclusion: Having no insurance, higher education, being non-Hispanic White and older are significantly associated with unknown HIV status among pregnant women.

Future implications: Our findings highlight the need to continue and strengthen efforts to prevent perinatal HIV transmission in the United States. Health care providers should recommend HIV testing before conception to reduce this mode of transmission.

Biography

Ali Dehghanifrouzabadi completed his MD from Iran University of Medical Sciences and he is a master student in Public Health at Jackson State University. In addition, he is working as a medical abstractor at Mississippi State Department of Health which gave him an opportunity to get involved in different research projects on HIV.

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