

# Impact of HIV-PrEP for female-sex-workers on community-wide awareness, uptake and perceptions in a rural area KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

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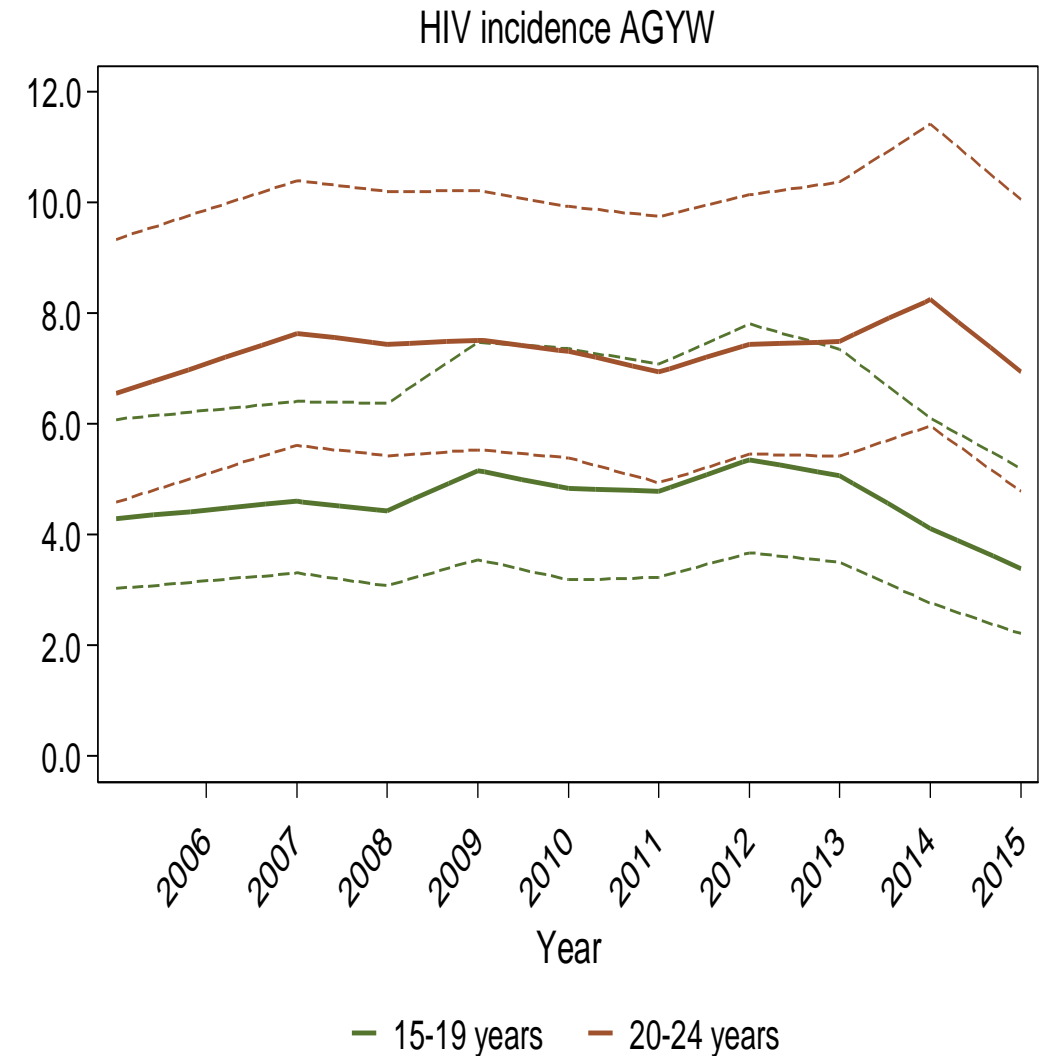
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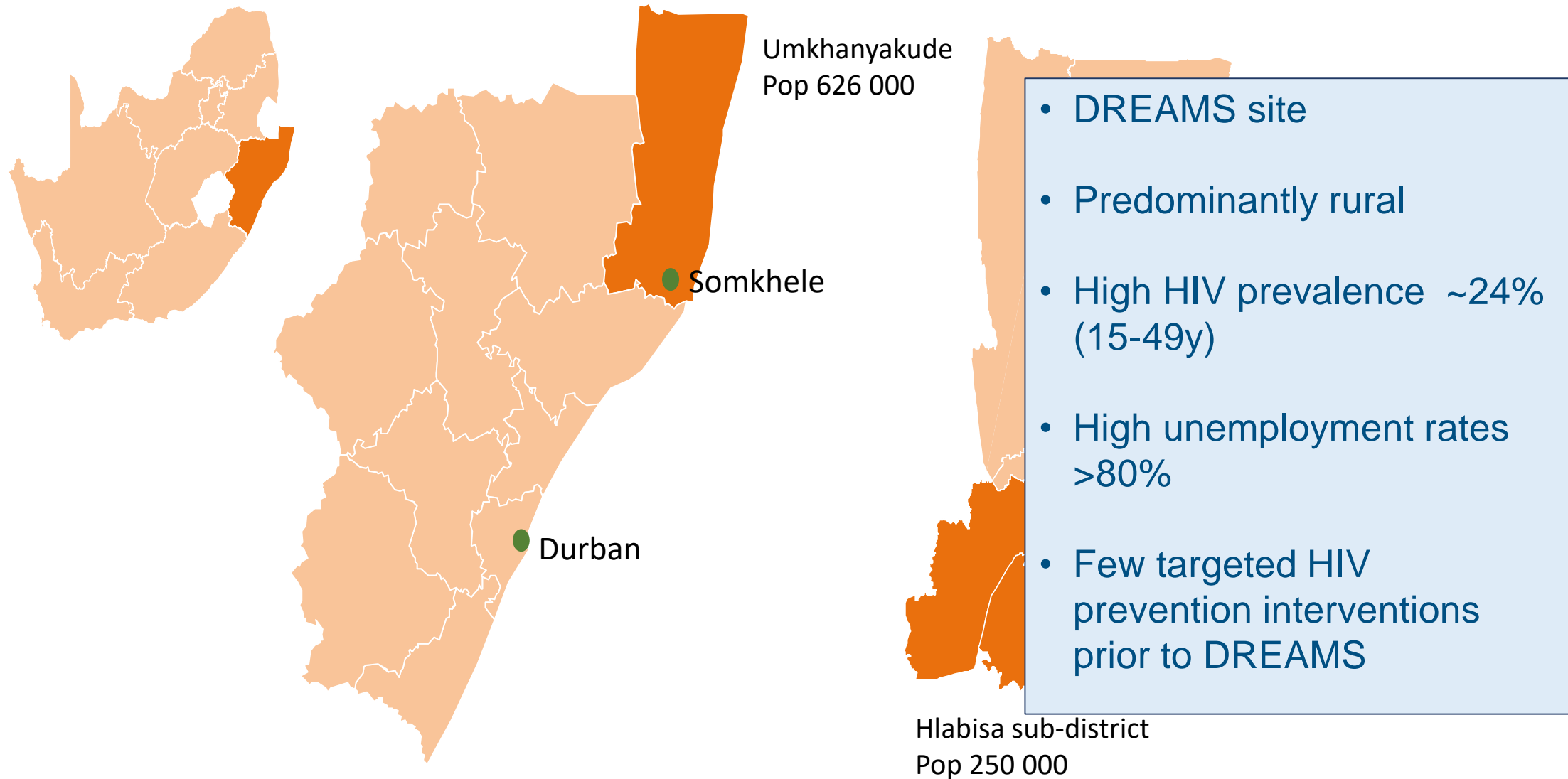


# Background

- Despite availability of HIV prevention, young people in South Africa remain at highest risk of HIV acquisition [Chimbindi et al 2018, Baisley et al 2018]
- Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was rolled out to female-sex-workers between 2016 and 2018
- *We use an HIV-prevention cascade framework to understand how implementation impacted at a population-level, demand for, access to and community members' attitudes towards PrEP*



# Study setting



# Study Design

- Mixed-method process evaluation
  - participatory community mapping (2017) & quantitative survey (2017-18)
- Community-mapping of 4 purposively sampled communities (1 semi-urban, 2 rural, 1 deep-rural)
  - Key in-depth interviews with implementing partners (n=33) & young people (n=58)
  - Community based group discussions (n=19)
  - Stakeholder interviews (n=9)
- Enrolled a representative cohort of n=2184 AGYW aged 13-22 years
- Collected data on uptake of HIV prevention, including eligibility, awareness and uptake of PrEP.
- Data collected electronically and self-filled

## Quant findings: Characteristics of nested cohort baseline (N=2184)

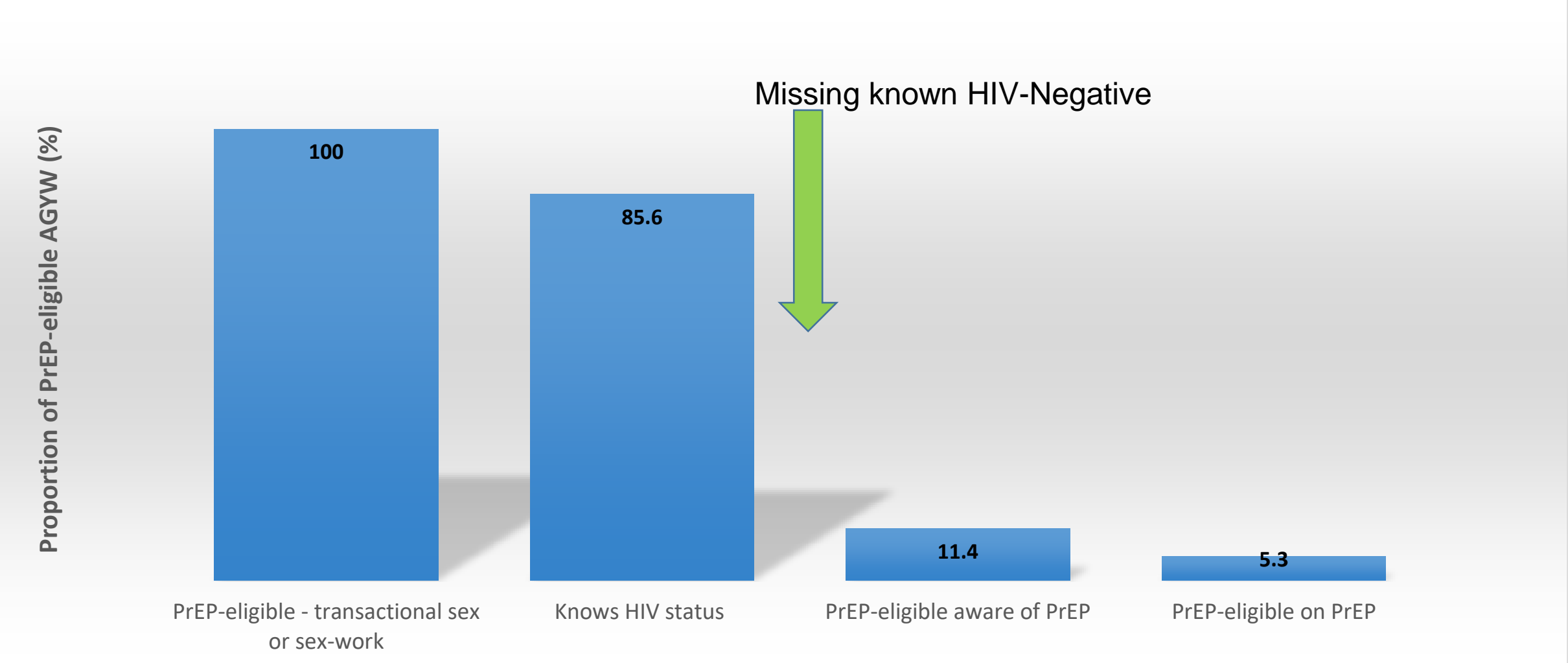
Characteristic	N	% (95% CI)
<b>Age group</b>		
13-17	1148	52.6 (50.5-54.7)
18-22	1036	47.4 (45.3-49.5)
<b>Location</b>		
Rural	1388	64.1 (62.1-66.1)
Peri-urban	660	30.5 (28.6-32.5)
Urban	117	5.4 (4.5-6.4)
<b>Currently in school (Yes)</b>	1644	75.3 (73.4-77.0)
<b>Socio-economic status</b>		
Low	727	35.1 (33.0-37.1)
Middle	747	36.0 (34.0-38.1)
High	600	28.9 (27.0-30.9)
<b>Ever migrated in the past years (Yes)</b>	403	18.5 (16.9-20.1)
<b>Food insecurity (Yes)</b>	682	31.2 (29.3-33.2)

# PrEP awareness for AGYW (N=2184)

- PrEP awareness increased from 2.0% (95% CI:1.5-2.7%) in 2017 to 9.0% (95% CI:7.3-9.8%) in 2018 ( $p<0.001$ )
- 965/2184 (44.2%) AGYW reported being sexually active
- 13.4% (95%CI: 11.4-15.7%) AGYW reported transactional sex\*
- 10.6% (95%CI:8.8-12.7%) AGYW reported sex for money\*
- \*n=194 AGYW were PrEP-eligible



# HIV prevention cascade for PrEP-eligible AGYW (n=194)



# Qual findings: Community and young people's awareness of PrEP

- Interview respondents were generally unaware of PrEP
- Some young people it was their first time to hear about PrEP and could not attach meaning to it

*“I don't know what it means even in Zulu”*

- Most community members were not aware of PrEP, often confusing it with post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)





# Community and young people's demand/benefit of PrEP

- PrEP was seen as a possible alternative to condoms,

*“eating sweets in a wrapping paper”* and

*“killing your babies”*

Because

*“...it will be in their system”*



# Community and young people's demand/benefit of PrEP

- PrEP was imagined would benefit young people, discordant couples and those with long-distance partners
- PrEP was thought to be more beneficial to boys or young men who were believed to *“love sex more than women”*

*“I think it is a good thing because...those who are in relationships with older people who are infected, they can be able to get treatment beside leaving him because of his HIV status.”*

# Community and young people's demand/benefit of PrEP

- Teachers and healthcare providers were more ambivalent about PrEP

*“Mmm doing that will mean setting them free to engage into unprotected sexual intercourse anyhow”*

# Conclusion

- PrEP awareness increased and was generally acceptable
- Uptake was low amongst eligible AGYW who reported FSW activity
- Targeted nature of public-sector PrEP may have affected reach and may affect future roll-out of PrEP to the wider population
- Community-based approaches to PrEP education and provision, including engagement of youth and key stakeholders, may help improve demand for, access to, and optimise the PrEP cascade

# Disclosure & Acknowledgements

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