

CONSISTENCY OF REPORTING SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND ADHERENCE VIA ACASI in HPTN 035

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Objectives

1. Investigate consistency in reporting of sexual behaviors and adherence in audio-computer assisted self interviewing (ACASI) in a vaginal microbicide clinical trial in Malawi
2. Identify questions that produce inconsistent answers via ACASI
3. Describe the characteristics of women who report inconsistent answers to ACASI

Methods

- Women enrolled in a microbicide safety and effectiveness trial (HPTN 035) in Blantyre and Lilongwe, Malawi who were randomly assigned to use gels during vaginal intercourse (gel arms), or no gel (no gel arm) were invited to complete an ACASI survey during a study follow-up visit
- ACASI surveys were administered after completion of face-to-face interview (FTFI).
- 585 participants completed an ACASI survey on the same day as an FTFI

- ACASI interview included 10 questions:
 - Q1. In the past 3 months, how many sex partners have you had? By sex partner, I mean someone with whom you have had vaginal sex
 - Q2. In the past week, how many times did you have vaginal sex?
 - Q3. In the past week, how many times did you use a male or female condom and not the study gel during vaginal sex?
 - Q4. In the past week, how many times did you use study gel and not a male or female condom during vaginal sex?
 - Q5. In the past week, how many times did you use study gel with a male or female condom during vaginal sex?
 - Q6. In the past week, how many times did you use neither study gel nor a male or female condom during vaginal sex?
 - Q7. The last time you had vaginal sex, did you or your partner use a male condom?
 - Q8. The last time you had vaginal sex, did you use study gel?
 - Q9. In the past 3 months, did you have anal sex?
 - Q10. Do you prefer answering questions to the computer or to a person?

- Consistency checks were programmed so that questions were repeated whenever answers were inconsistent i.e. **Q3, Q4, Q5 or Q6 exceeded Q2** (but not when Q3+Q4+Q5+Q6 exceeded Q2).
- An “inconsistent” response was any in which a response value was changed to a new value in the ACASI survey.

Results

- Mean age was 26 years; 67.1% had not completed primary school and 14% had no education.
- In the no-gel arm (n=153), 15% of participants reported an inconsistent answer.
- In the gel arms (n=432):
 - 19.2% reported 1 inconsistent answer
 - 8.1% reported 2 inconsistent answers
 - 1.4% reported 3 inconsistent answers
- In the gel arms, inconsistent responses were given more frequently for more complicated questions about use of both gel and condom use (12%), and use of gel but no condom (11%)
- Changed responses were consistent 85% of the time (136/160 responses)

Table 1: Demographic and behavioral characteristics associated with reporting at least one inconsistent answer.

	Reported at least one inconsistent response			P-value
	No	Yes	Total	
Age (years)				
Mean	26	27	26	0.85
Education				
None	52 (66.7%)	26 (33.3%)	78 (13.3%)	0.09
Some primary school	286 (75.1%)	95 (24.9%)	381 (65.1%)	
Some secondary school	100 (79.4%)	26 (20.6%)	126 (21.5%)	
Owens home				
Yes	296 (75.5%)	96 (24.5%)	392 (67.0%)	0.85
No	142 (73.6%)	51 (26.4%)	193 (33.0%)	
Electricity in home				
Yes	45 (78.9%)	12 (21.1%)	57 (9.7%)	0.90
No	393 (74.4%)	135 (25.6%)	528 (90.3%)	
Site				
Blantyre	159 (71.3%)	64 (28.7%)	223 (38.1%)	0.16
Lilongwe	279 (77.1%)	83 (22.9%)	362 (61.9%)	
Number of sex acts in last week				
Mean	3.1	2.8	3.0	0.12
Number of times used condom in last week				
Mean	1.9	1.6	1.8	0.34
Used condom at last act				
No	188 (70.4%)	79 (29.6%)	267 (45.6%)	0.06
Yes	250 (78.6%)	68 (21.4%)	318 (54.4%)	

- In bivariate analyses, reporting an inconsistent answer was associated with lack of condom use during last sex act (p value=0.033). Women with lower education were more likely to provide inconsistent responses.

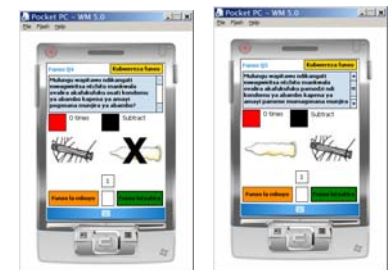
Table 2. Multivariate Analyses: Predictors of reporting at least one inconsistent answer

	OR	95% CI
Blantyre	1.46	0.99-2.20
Education	0.70	0.49-0.98
Age group	1.06	0.83-1.30
Condom use at last sex act	0.66	0.45-0.96

- In multivariate analyses, women with more education (OR=0.70; 95% CI: 0.49-0.98) and those who reported condom use at last act (OR= 0.66; 95% CI: 0.45-0.96) had lower odds of reporting an inconsistent response.
- The association between condom use and lower odds of reporting an inconsistent answer is an intriguing finding that deserves further investigation

Conclusions

- In the ACASI survey, inconsistent answers across questions were common; however, comparisons with inconsistent reporting in FTFI were not possible because interviewers worked with participants to avoid inconsistent answers
- Built-in consistency checks and prompts enabled women to change their answers to be consistent with previous responses; many women used these to improve their consistency in reporting
- Due to programming limitations, future trials using ACASI would benefit from simple behavioral questions, which would reduce the likelihood of inconsistent responses.



HPTN 035 was funded by the United States National Institutes of Health. The study was designed and implemented by the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) and the Microbicide Trials Network (MTN). The HPTN (U01AI046749) has been funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), and National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The MTN (U01AI068633) has been funded by the NIAID, NICHD, and NIMH. ReProtect, Inc., and Endo Pharmaceuticals (formerly Indevus Pharmaceuticals Inc.) supplied the BufferGel and PRO 2000 Gel tested in this study free of charge. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supported the manufacturing of BufferGel for this study.