STAR: A Prospective Cohort of Women of Reproductive Age with and without HIV in the Southern U.S.

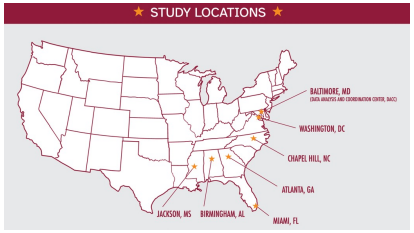
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BACKGROUND

- Nearly 25% of people living with HIV (LWH) in the US are women, most of whom are racial/ethnic minorities in the south.
- In 2022, people assigned female sex at birth accounted for 18% of the almost 38,000 incident HIV diagnoses.
  - Of those, Black/African Americans age >=13 accounted for 50%, and 20% were Hispanic/Latina.
- Minority women and women LWH commonly face unplanned pregnancies, adverse pregnancy and long-term clinical outcomes, poor retention in care and ART adherence, and higher mortality compared with men, white women, and older women.
- **Understanding the effects of HIV among minority women of reproductive age** is vital.



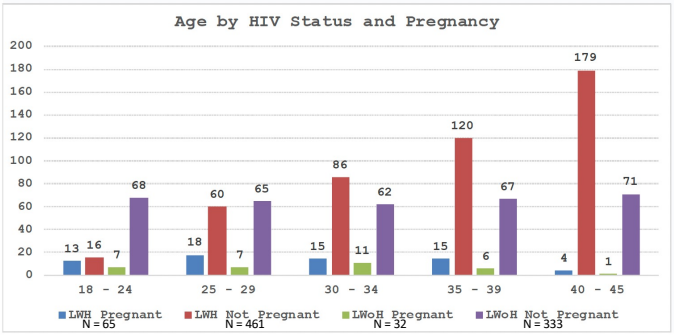
METHODS

- Eligible participants were ages 18-45, female at birth, willing and able to have blood drawn and stored, and consented to medical record abstraction for pregnancy-related outcomes, including infant data.
- Structured interviews are conducted in person at baseline, 6, 12, and 18 months, and by phone semiannually thereafter with additional visits for pregnancy and postpartum. Interviews assess oral, mental, and reproductive health. Oral exams are also done at in-person visits.
- Biospecimens (blood, urine, and hair, as well as oral, vaginal, and rectal swabs) are tested and/or stored in a biorepository.
- Major aims include **assessments of mental and oral health on HIV and overall health outcomes, *particularly during pregnancy and postpartum***

STAR is a cohort of
>1,000 women ages 18-45
living with and without HIV in
the ***southern USA***

RESULTS

- Data presented are from **N=891 women enrolled March 2021 – April 2024.**
- **At baseline, 97 (11%) women were pregnant, of whom 65 (67%) were LWH.**
- Through February 2025 there have been 42 incident pregnancies during follow-up.
- 679 (76%) participants self-report as Black/African-American, and 96 (11%) as Latina.
- 173 (19%) did not graduate from high school; 616 (73%) had monthly household income ≤$3,000.
- In the year prior to enrollment:
  - 669 (75%) used alcohol, 395 (44%) used marijuana, and 121 (14%) used other drugs.
- In the 5 years prior to enrollment:
  - 184 (21%) had sex with a man LWH, and 360 (40%) had a STI diagnosis.



CONCLUSIONS

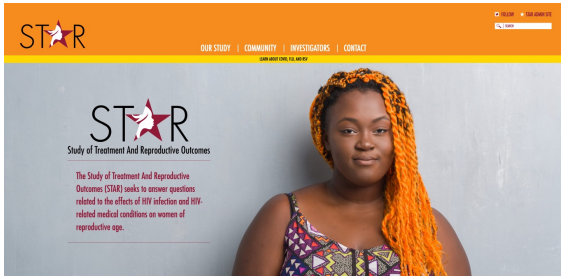
- Barriers to healthcare access, such as mental health challenges and substance use, continue to contribute to higher HIV prevalence among women in the southern US.
- STAR provides critical insights into the intersection of HIV, reproductive health, and social determinants of health among women of reproductive age in the Southern U.S.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Study Website: www.starstudy.org

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STAR
Study of Treatment and Reproductive Outcomes

