

Abstract

Background: Health-care providers form the backbone of health information and service delivery in many African communities. This study investigated health-care providers' (HCPs) attitudes towards a novel method of HIV prevention for women—a microbicide-embedded intravaginal ring (IVR). **Methods:** Qualitative interviews were conducted, covering initial attitudes towards IVRs, potential use among female sex workers, herbal practices for sexually transmitted infection (STI) management and the ways in which populations can access the rings should they become available. Twenty HCPs were interviewed in Mukuru and Kibera, which are informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya, with high HIV prevalence, unemployment and commercial sex work. **Results:** The majority of HCPs had positive attitudes towards IVRs as a method of HIV prevention in this environment. HCPs liked that IVRs are female controlled and can be used covertly. Overall, HCPs reported a willingness to participate in the distribution of IVRs, and favoured distribution through health facilities at no cost. **Conclusion:** Findings from this study demonstrate that HCPs are willing to serve as the primary source of IVR information in target communities. However, they require adequate knowledge regarding microbicides and IVRs before these products reach the market