

Willingness to Use and Preference for Long-Acting Dapivirine Vaginal Ring for HIV Prevention Among Female Sex Workers in Vietnam

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OVERVIEW

The national pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) guidelines were first issued by the Ministry of Health in 2017. PrEP was provided to 42,108 clients (88% male) at 242 clinics in 29 of 63 provinces as of March 2023. Oral TDF/FTC, funded by PEPFAR and Global Fund, is the only drug currently available for PrEP in Vietnam.

BACKGROUND

The long-acting dapivirine vaginal ring (LA-DVR) was endorsed in the 2021 Vietnam PrEP guidelines despite its unavailability in country. Currently, there are limited data on LA-DVR in Vietnam and in Asia more broadly. This study aims to assess the willingness to use and preference for LA-DVR for HIV prevention among female sex workers (FSWs) in Vietnam.

METHODS

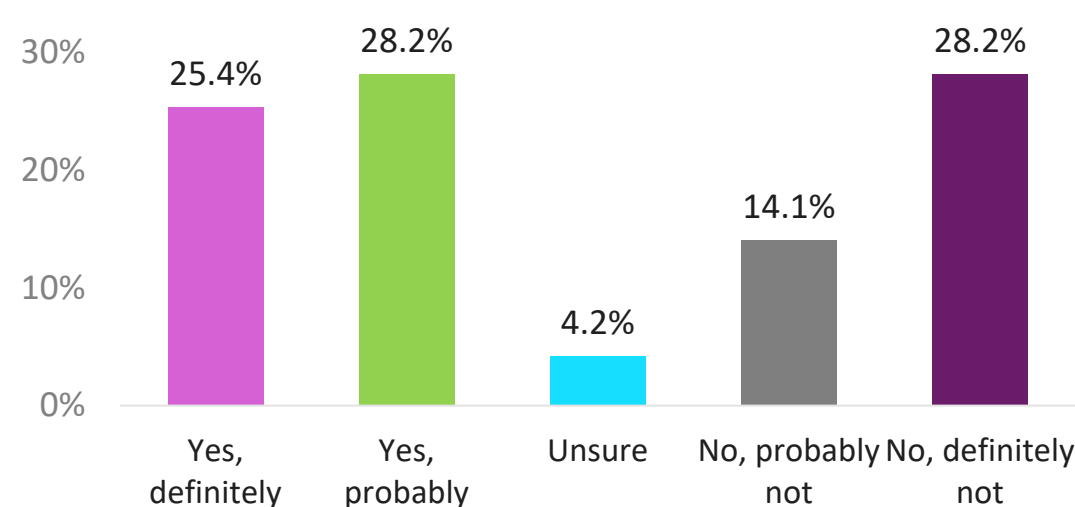
Data collection was conducted from July to August 2022 and followed a cross-sectional design. We recruited 71 HIV-negative females aged ≥18 years who reported sex work in past 12 months via purposive sampling through community-based organizations in 4 high-burden provinces in Vietnam. We provided basic information about LA-DVR to participants prior to conducting structured interviews. Descriptive statistics were used.

RESULTS

- Among 71 FSWs, mean age was 39 years (SD=9.0), and 57.7% had at least secondary education, with average monthly household income of 48 USD.

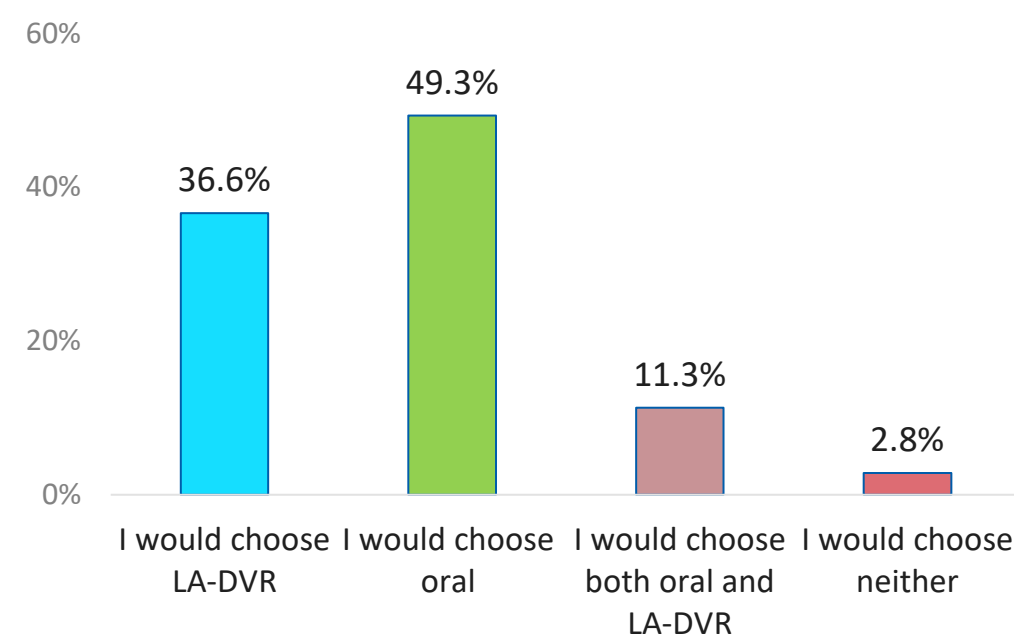
- In the last 12 months, 56.3% had condomless sex, 14.1% used drugs during last sex and 42.2% had more than 6 sex partners. 52.1% had never taken oral PrEP, and 48.7% of these did not know about PrEP.

Willingness to use LA-DVR among FSWs (n=71)

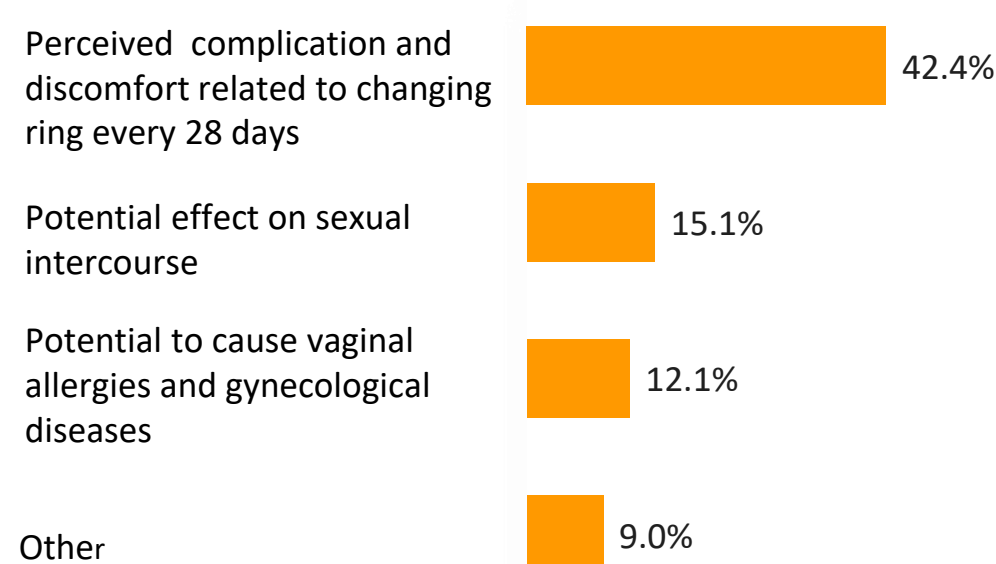


- Overall, 53.5% reported definite or probable willingness to use LA-DVR if available. When given a choice between oral PrEP and LA-DVR, 36.6% of the overall sample preferred LA-DVR, 49.3% oral, and 11.3% both, with 2.8% choosing neither.

More FSW preferred oral PrEP than LA-DVR (n=71)



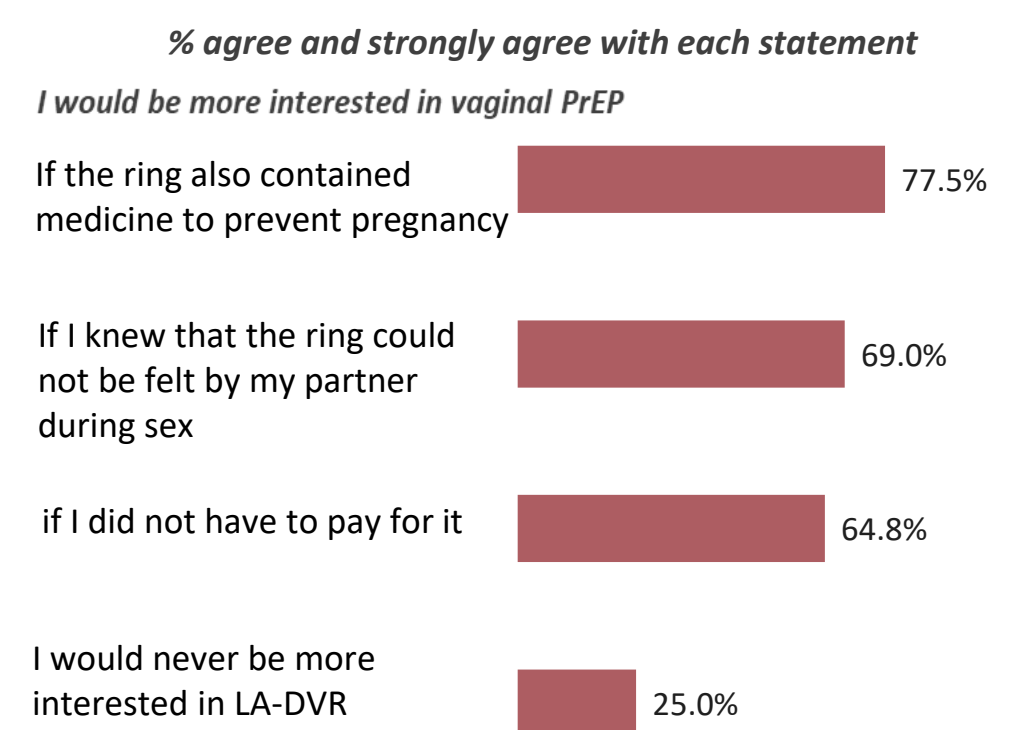
Reasons FSW were not willing to use LA-DVR (n=33)



Among those not willing to use or unsure; participants could choose more than one option

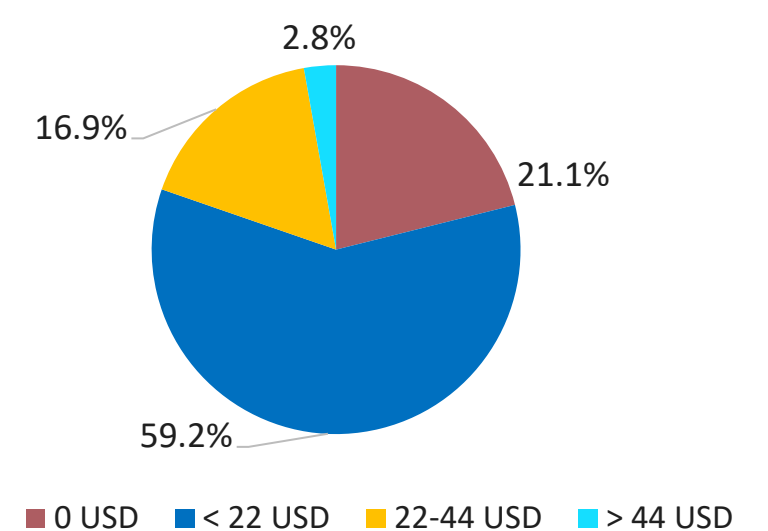
- FSWs would be more interested in LA-DVR if it contained medicine to prevent pregnancy (77.5%), it could not be felt during sex (69.0%), and they did not have to pay (64.8%).

Features increasing interest in LA-DVR among FSW (n=71) -



Participants could choose more than one option

Maximum amount participants were willing to pay per month for LA-DVR (n=71)



CONCLUSIONS

Over half of FSWs were definitely or probably willing to use LA-DVR and over one third preferred it to oral PrEP, suggesting that LA-DVR can fill a gap to increase PrEP usage in this key population. LA-DVR uptake may be enhanced by offering it free, co-formulating it with contraception, and addressing main reasons for unwillingness to use. It would be beneficial to increase PrEP literacy and oral PrEP access among FSW while pursuing LA-DVR availability in Vietnam.

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