

Holding the line: Family responses to pregnancy and the desire for a child in the context of HIV in Vietnam

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Abstract: Health services around the world offer many guidelines for HIV-positive women who are pregnant or who want to become pregnant, and for women with HIV infected partners. These guidelines are addressed to women and, increasingly, also to men, but pay little or no attention to the role of other members of the family in fertility decisions. This study looked at factors influencing decisions about fertility in families with an HIV-positive member. In Vietnam, the whole family takes a crucial role in deciding whether a woman should become pregnant and whether she will keep her child. This decision is taken in the context not only of the close family but also under the influence of ancestors and the weight given to them within the culture. Key in this regard is the need for parents and grandparents to have male offspring. Health workers share these ideas about preferred family composition and support men and women in the quest for male offspring. Policies and guidelines should take into account these additional family factors and goals as a basis for the design of appropriate programmes to reduce HIV transmission.

Author Keywords: Ancestors; Child desire; Family; HIV; Vietnam

Index Keywords: adult; article; cultural factor; cultural value; family decision making; female; grandparent; harm reduction; health care policy; health program; human; Human immunodeficiency virus infected patient; Human immunodeficiency virus infection; infection prevention; male; parent; pregnancy; priority journal; vertical transmission; Viet Nam; virus transmission; Adult; Cultural Characteristics; Family Conflict; Female; Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice; HIV Infections; Humans; Intergenerational Relations; Male; Middle Aged; Parenting; Pregnancy; Pregnancy Complications, Infectious; Reproductive Behavior; Social Environment; Social Values; Vietnam

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