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Time Space Sampling: Evaluation of a Novel Sampling Method in the Development of Evidence-Based Sentinel Surveillance Strategies for HIV and STI Prevalence among MSM in Urban Peru

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Abstract

Introduction: Accurately capturing HIV prevalence and sociobehavioral risk factors in sentinel surveillance is crucial for the development of effective intervention strategies among sub-populations at high-risk for HIV infection. While disproportionately high HIV seroprevalence (18-22%) has consistently been reported among MSM in Peru, this population presents unique barriers to effective sentinel surveillance. Consequently, the utilization of evidence-based sampling strategies is imperative in determining HIV prevalence and sociobehavioral risk factors among MSM in urban Peru. Objectives: To contribute to the formative evaluation of Time Space Sampling (TSS) as a potential method for HIV and syphilis sentinel surveillance among MSM in Lima, Peru. Methods: Participant observations and in-depth interviews were conducted during TSS recruitment outings. Additionally, CASI questionnaires were evaluated based upon the following criteria: content, consistency, flow, accurate respondent recall, potential for bias, and cultural suitability. Results: TSS teams were successful in participant recruitment for on-site syphilis and HIV testing. However, lengthy testing time (1-1.5 hours) in combination with a two participant on-site testing capacity could introduce loss to follow-up among potential recruits. While the CASI addressed a variety of sociobehavioral risk factors, it was observed that certain structural issues related to the content of the survey resulted in minor difficulties during field implementation. Conclusions: The use of TSS could be extremely useful in accurately capturing HIV prevalence among MSM in Lima, Peru. Further evaluation of TSS as a sampling strategy for HIV prevalence would be extremely beneficial to the development of evidence-based sampling strategies among MSM in Peru, as well as other high-risk sub-populations.

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65