



Supporting the health and well-being of young parents living with HIV and their children in Zimbabwe

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Background

- The success of ART means that an increasing number of perinatally HIV infected adolescent girls and women are reaching adulthood, becoming pregnant and thus being Adolescent/young mothers.
- 2018: The Third Generation Study was conducted to describe the clinical and psychosocial status of young mums and their babies. Supported by UNICEF. (*Mupambireyi, 2018*)
 - 177 mothers, 176 babies
 - 68% married
 - 76% unemployed
 - 86.9% viral suppression
 - 55.9% at risk of depression, strongly associated with violence
 - 44.1% had disclosed to their partners
 - 12.7% infants at risk of developmental delay



Young Mentor Mothers

- Zvandiri's Young Mentor Mother (YMM) intervention connects pregnant and breastfeeding adolescent girls and young women with trained peer counsellors who are themselves young mothers living with HIV.
- The YMM are attached to their local health facilities and provide their clients with information, counselling, support and linkage to services across the health facilities, communities, support groups and through digital health.
- Role modelling and sharing of parenting skills and coping techniques
- 72 YMMs were trained and mentored to support 1671 mother-baby pairs in 38 sites across Zimbabwe. YMM training curriculum was utilised for the training.
- In addition to on-site mentorship and supervision for the YMMs, a digital support group has also been established to provide support for the YMMs own physical and mental health.



Results – young mums and their babies

- Of the 1671 young mothers supported from 38/1600 sites of Zimbabwe
 - **97%** have an undetectable viral load
 - **97.6%** of HIV-exposed babies are HIV negative at final outcome
 - MTCT rate of **2.4%**, compared with **8.2%** in the general population nationally.



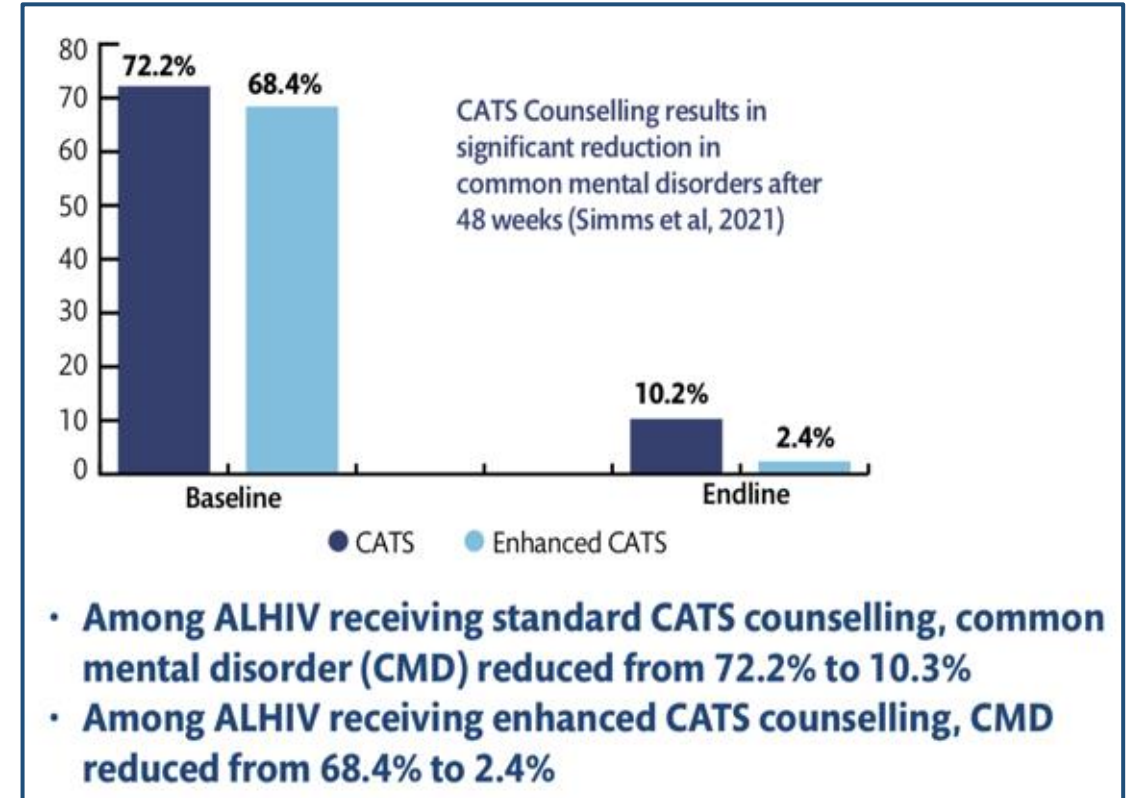
Results – young dads

- YMMs have been found to be highly effective in engaging young fathers.
- Through YMMs' counselling and linkage to services for partners of young mothers
 - **92%** of partners tested for HIV
 - **66%** of partners were newly diagnosed with HIV
 - **99%** of them were initiated on ART
 - **98%** of partners testing negative were linked and initiated on Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)



Results – mental health

- Mental health data among young mums and dads is currently being analysed
- But symptoms of common mental conditions among young people in Zvandiri such as: anxiety, depression has been found to:
 - reduce from **68%** to **2%** among young people supported by Zvandiri.



Success Factors

- Government leadership and coordination
- Integration of YMM within national EMTCT programme
- Evidence-generation to inform the YMM intervention
- Standardized tools for YMM recruitment, training, supervision and mentorship
- Sustained mentorship and supervision
- Careful management of a feasible caseload
- Integration of mental health, GBV, SRH services within YMM intervention
- Engagement of young dads to pilot the Young Mentor Dads intervention



Recommendations

- Continued scale up of YMM and YMD interventions within national EMTCT and OVC programmes.
- Longitudinal follow up of clinical, psychosocial outcomes for children of young parents living with HIV
- Invest in sustained training, mentorship and succession planning for YMMs and YMDs
- Linkage of young parents to economic strengthening opportunities and ECD programmes
- Ensure integration of services to support mental health, violence prevention and partner disclosure



Thank you

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