

Sexual and reproductive health of women living with HIV/AIDS

Guidelines on care, treatment and support for women living with HIV/AIDS and their children in resource-constrained settings



World Health
Organization

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HPV	human papillomavirus
IUD	intrauterine device
NRTI	nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor
NNRTI	non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor
RTI	reproductive tract infection
STI	sexually transmitted infection
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The sexual and reproductive health of women living with HIV/AIDS is fundamental to their well-being and that of their partners and children. This publication addresses the specific sexual and reproductive health needs of women living with HIV/AIDS and contains recommendations for counselling, antiretroviral therapy, care and other interventions.

Improving women's sexual and reproductive health, treating HIV infections and preventing new ones are important factors in reducing poverty and promoting the social and economic development of communities and countries. Sexual and reproductive health services are uniquely positioned to address each of these factors.

EQUITY AND RIGHTS

Gender plays an important role in determining a woman's vulnerability to HIV infection and violence and her ability to access treatment, care and support and to cope when infected or affected. The current scope of HIV interventions and policies needs to be expanded to make gender equity a central component in the fight against HIV.

All women have the same rights concerning their reproduction and sexuality, but women living with HIV/AIDS require additional care and counselling during their reproductive life. HIV infection accelerates the natural history of some reproductive illnesses, increases the severity of others and adversely affects the ability to become pregnant. Moreover, infection with HIV affects the sexual health and well-being of women.

HIV AND SEXUAL HEALTH

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