



6 – 10 October · Lima, Peru and virtual

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Elizabeth Irungu, Jhpiego

Co-authors: Mark Conlon, Ramatsoai Soothoane, Kevin K'orimba, Nicolette Naidoo,Carolyn Akello, Emily Gwavava, Patricia Jeckonia, Imelda Mahaka, Michael Etukiot, Rose Wafula, Rosina Phate-Lesihla, Hasina Subedar, Herbert Kadama, Rose Wilcher, Ashley Mayo, and Kristine Torjesen on behalf of the CATALYST study team

PrEP choice for women in Africa: Uptake of oral PrEP and the PrEP ring



Summary

What is your main question?

In health facilities that offer an **enhanced service delivery package for informed PrEP choice** to women in Africa, what is the uptake of various PrEP methods and what factors are related to method choice?

What did you find?

Women took advantage of PrEP choice. One third chose PrEP ring. Age, prior PrEP use, number of sex partners, and pregnancy and breastfeeding status are associated with method choice.

Why is it important?

Now that biomedical prevention options are expanding, understanding PrEP method choice and uptake when women are offered PrEP choice can inform PrEP programs in Africa.

Background

Women and girls in Africa are disproportionately affected by HIV

- 62% of new HIV infections in the region occur among women and girls*

Primary prevention of HIV remains a priority

- Oral PrEP is part of HIV programming in many countries in Africa, though use has been suboptimal
- The PrEP ring was recommended as an additional prevention option for women by WHO in 2021

An understanding of uptake of oral PrEP and the PrEP ring when women are offered choice is needed to guide expansion of PrEP programs in Africa

CATALYST study



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1. The study aims to characterize and assess an enhanced service delivery package for **informed PrEP choice** for women in existing PrEP sites in five African countries
2. Participants were eligible to enroll if they were
 - HIV negative
 - Women* 18 years or older or mature minors where countries permit
 - Interested in learning about HIV prevention
 - Willing to be contacted
 - Willing and able to provide informed consent
3. PrEP is offered according to national guidelines
4. Participants choose a preferred method and can switch methods during any clinic visit

**Inclusive of individuals assigned female at birth of any gender identity or individuals assigned male at birth who identify as women*

Methods

The study is split into two distinct stages based on product availability

- Stage I – PrEP ring and oral PrEP
- Stage II – CAB PrEP, the PrEP ring, and oral PrEP

This analysis reflects interim data from Stage I and aims to:

- i. Describe PrEP uptake among those offered PrEP choice
- ii. Explore factors related to method choice using logistic regression methods
- iii. Describe reasons for choices made



Results

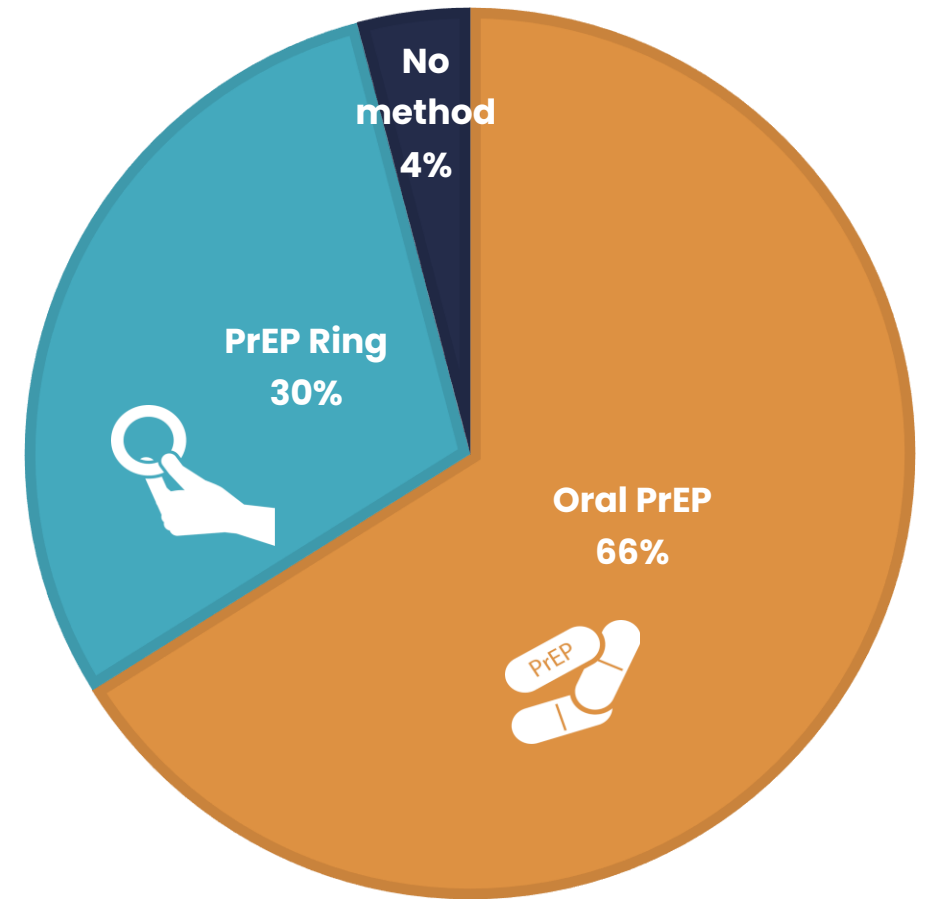
Between May 2023 – July 2024, we enrolled 3,967 participants.



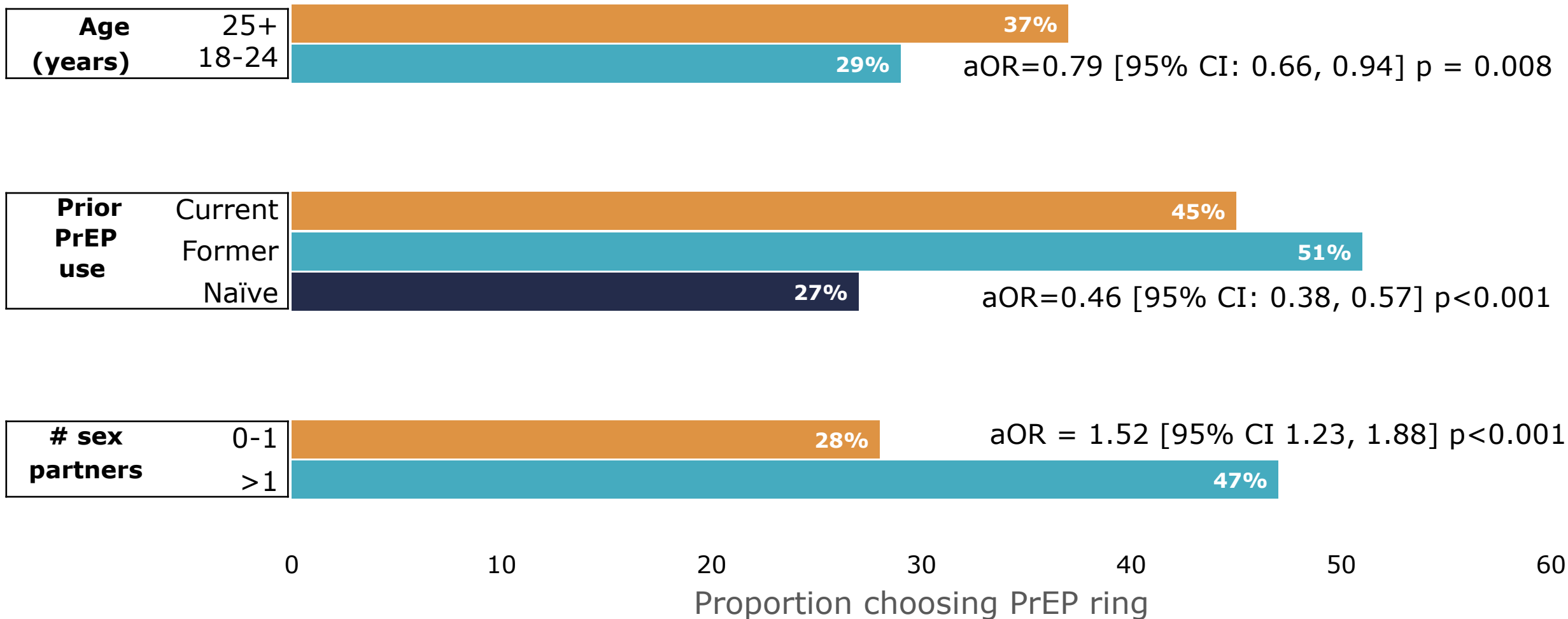
| Participant characteristics | N (%) |
|--|--------------|
| Age less than 24 years | 1,780 (45%) |
| Sex worker | 1,010 (26%) |
| PrEP naïve | 2,677 (68%) |
| Current PrEP user | 659 (17%) |
| Former PrEP user | 584 (15%) |
| Currently using modern contraception | 2,160 (54%) |
| Any condomless vaginal sex in past month | 1,301 (33%) |
| Pregnant at enrollment | 347 (9%) |
| Breastfeeding at enrollment | 482 (12%) |

PrEP choice at enrollment

- Overall (n= 3967)
 - Oral PrEP – 2627 (66%)
 - PrEP ring – 1187 (30%)
 - No method – 137 (4%)
- Country guidelines differed regarding eligibility for PrEP ring based on age, pregnancy and/or breastfeeding status
- Of those who could choose and chose a method (n = 3483)
 - Oral PrEP – 2301 (66%)
 - PrEP ring – 1182 (34%)

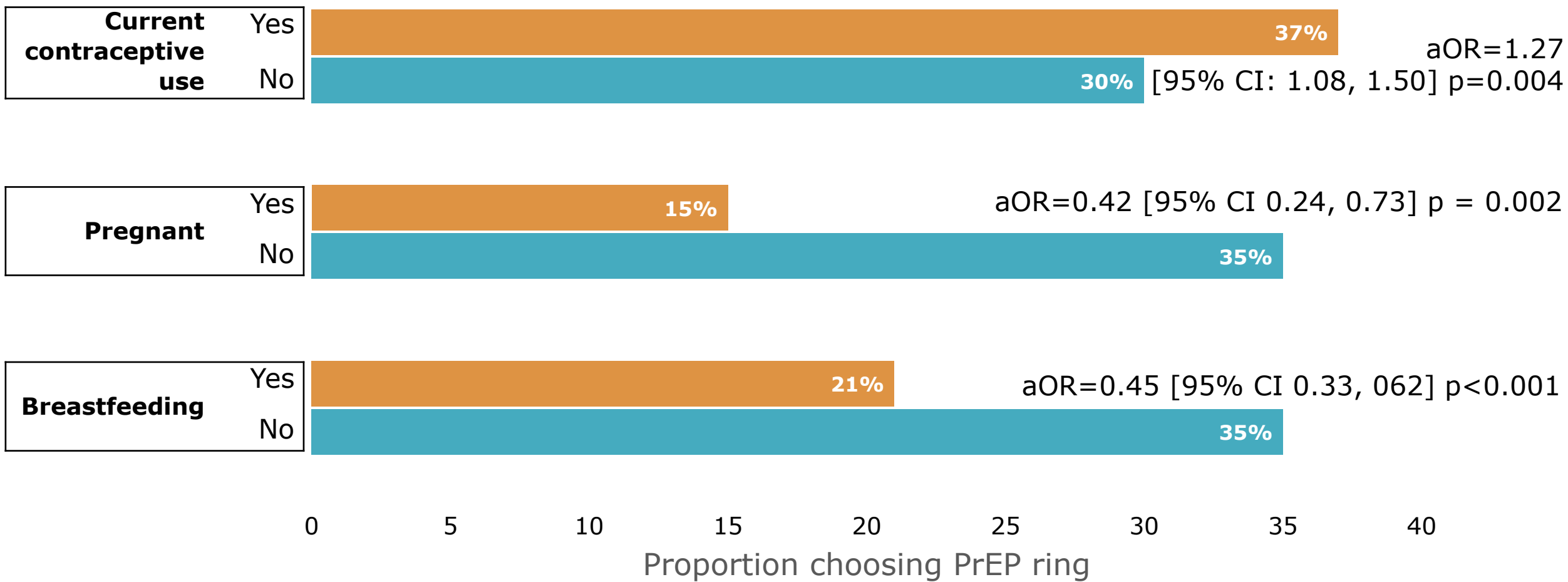


Factors associated with choosing PrEP ring vs. oral PrEP*



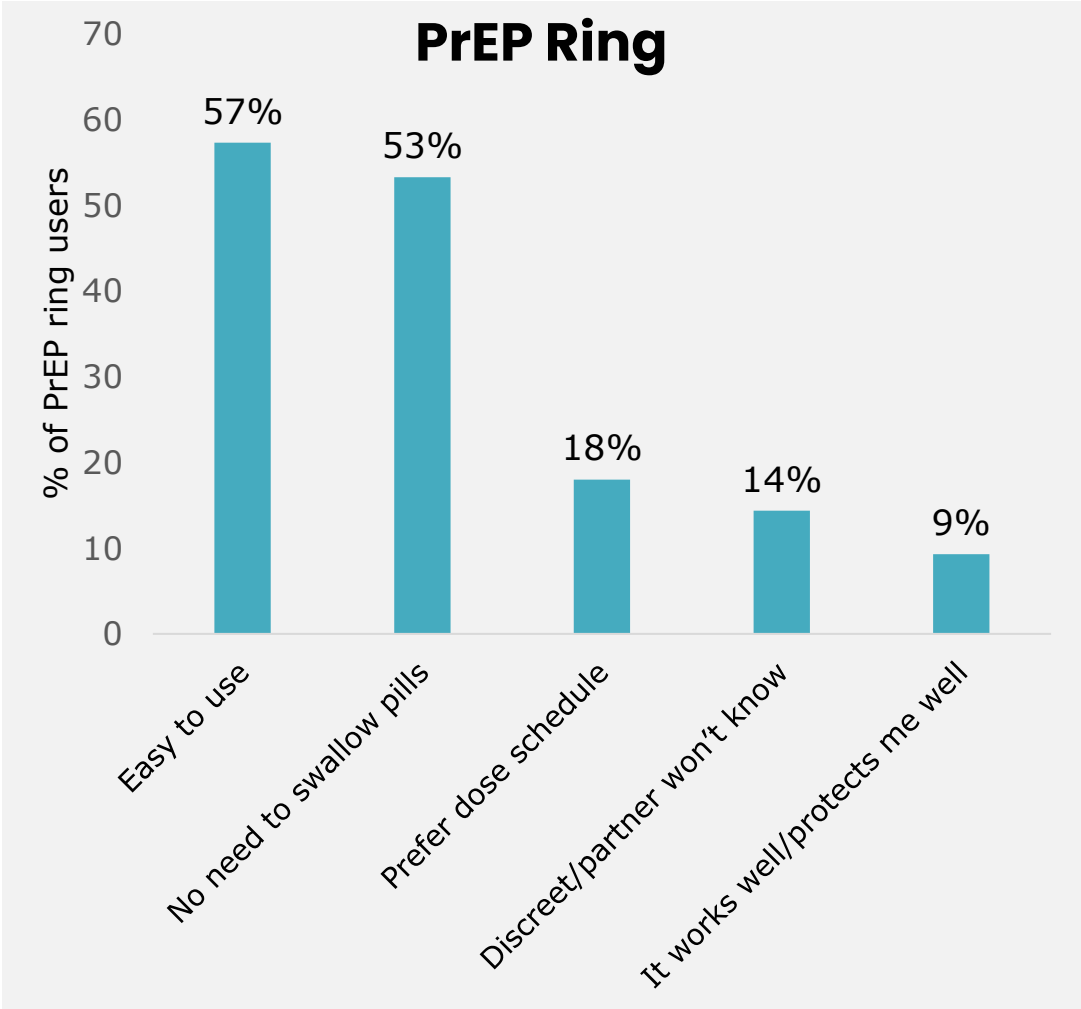
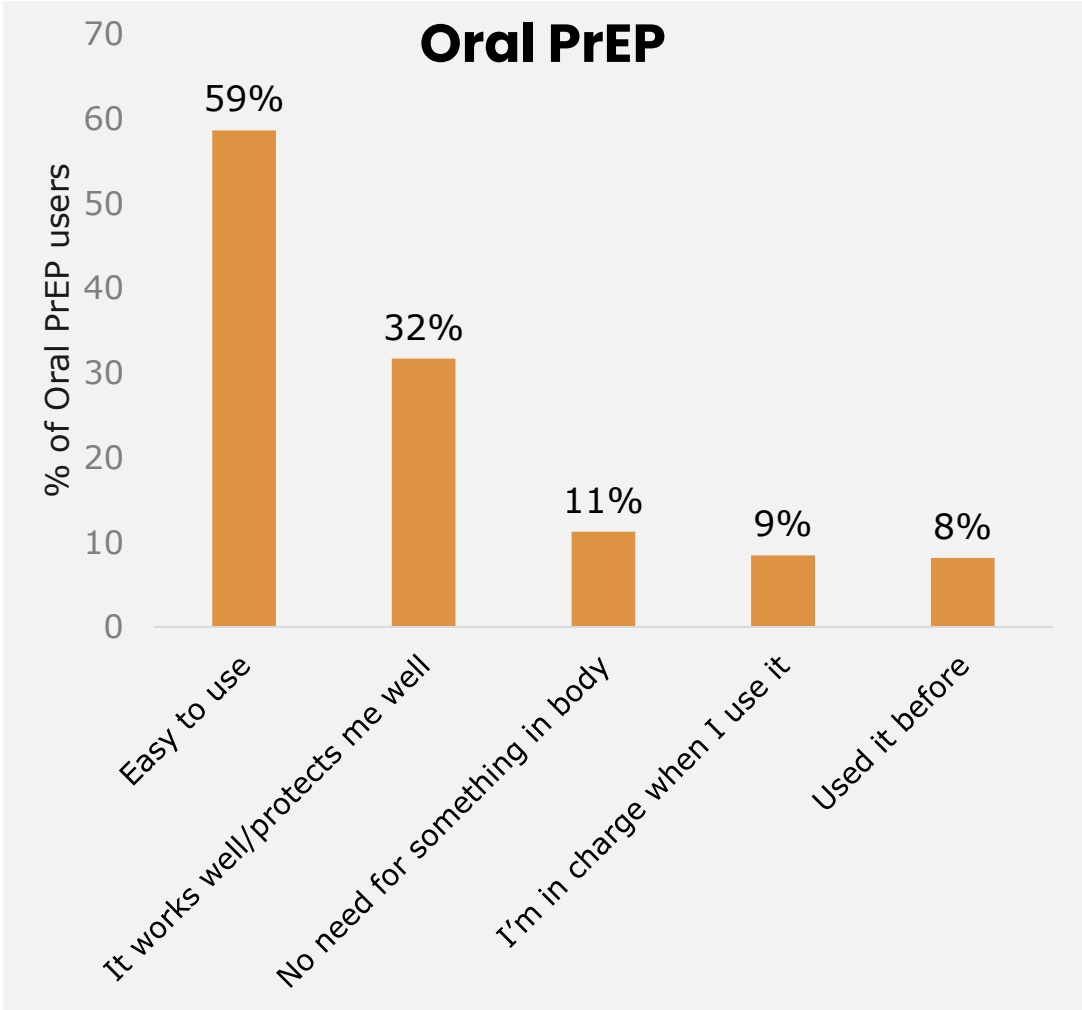
*Among all participants who had a choice at enrollment and chose a method
 Individual factors associated with method choice ($p < 0.05$) including country, age, prior PrEP use, education, sex worker, # sex partners, contraceptive use, condomless sex, marital status, PBF status were retained in the multivariate model

Factors associated with choosing the PrEP ring vs. oral PrEP*



*Among all participants who had a choice at enrollment and chose a method
 Individual factors associated with method choice ($p < 0.05$) including country, age, prior PrEP use, education, sex worker, # sex partners, contraceptive use, condomless sex, marital status, PBF status were retained in the multivariate model

Top 5 reasons for PrEP choice made



Conclusions

Women are taking advantage of PrEP choice:

- About a third chose the PrEP ring
- Younger women, new PrEP users, and pregnant and breastfeeding women are less likely to use the PrEP ring
- Those with more than one partner and those using contraceptives are more likely to use the PrEP ring

Individuals chose PrEP methods that work for them, selecting a method that is easy for them to use

- For some women PrEP ring was their choice, despite its modest efficacy

It is feasible to deliver PrEP choice in existing PrEP facilities in Africa



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For more information on patterns of PrEP use among CATALYST study participants, please see poster 01221:

Patterns of PrEP use among women in the context of choice: Early results from CATALYST, an implementation study offering oral PrEP and the PrEP ring across five African countries

V. Fonner,¹ M. Conlon,¹ G. Chidumwa,² A. Chivafa,³ R. Drysdale,² J. Kabongo,³ A. Kazibwe,⁴ K. K'orimba,⁵ K. Kripke,⁶ N. Marake,⁷ P. Mudiope,⁸ G. Ncube,⁹ J. Omentiah,¹⁰ J. Reed,¹¹ D. Taylor,¹ L.N. Wamala,¹² E. Irungu¹¹



The CATALYST Study Team

Kenya: Annabell Dollah, Annette Otin, Beatrice Anyango, Caleb Owino, Claire Viola Otieno, Corolyne Omom, Cynthia Atieno, Dora Bloch, Douglas Omosa, Duke Sangara, Elvis Oyugi, Harriet Tzindoli, Japheth Otieno, Jonah Onentiah Magara, Judy Onsomu, Kevin K'Orimba, Leonard Soo, Margaret Atieno, Margaret Njiraini, Merci Niyibeshaho, Millicent Kiruki, Millicent Oundo, Moses Otieno, Naumy Mumo, Nelius Ruiru, Njambi Njuguna, Patricia Oluoch, Patricia Jeckonia, Robinson Karuga, Rose Kahariri, Rose Wafula, Serah Mwizila, Susan Arodi, Sophie Atieno

Lesotho: John Byabagambi, Lefulesele Mohaesa, Makatleho Lethola, Mahlamene Monyaesa, Makatleho Makeke, Makeneiloe Ramapepe, Makhafa Maope, Maleaooa Chaole, Mamaphau Kubutu, Mamatli Chabela, Mamohloai Kobeli, Mathabo Senamolele, Matsau Nkongoane, Montsi Sello, Moreboli Lekhema, Nthuseng Marake, Ntoetse Sekhonyana, Ntsebo Lerotholi, Ntsoaki Mabohla, Oluwakemi Moriam Adeleke, Poloko Sojane, Ramatsoai Soothoane, Rosina Phate-Lesihla, Taurayi Gwande, Thabo Taleng

South Africa: Alina Mamokone, Amogelang Sasha Kekana, Catherine Martin, Cecilia Ramabalane, Celimpilo Nkambule, Chikondi Divala, Constance Masobe, Cynthia Leeu, Dudu Ntuli, Elmari Briedenhann, Gava Joseph, Glory Chidumwa, Hasina Subedar, Lauren Parmley, Joy Lephalala, Kagiso Tlabo, Kodisang Mathapelo, Lebogang Rangata, Lebone Thedi, Lisa Mills, Mahlaku Sebiloane, Mahlatse Motloatsi, Malehlohonolo Mothekhe, Maletsatsi Mokoena, Maletsatsi Monametsi, Melanie Pleaner, Modiehi Mopeli, Mojalefa Makae, Mpelege Nemakhavhani, Nakita Sheobalak, Nedine Van Den Berg, Nesengani Sharon, Nhlamulo Chantel Manganye, Nicolette Naidoo, Nqobile Mthimkhulu, Ntebohelong Mohale, Nthabeleng Moeti, Nthabiseng Makalela, Ntombosindiso Mokoena, Ontlakarabela Freda, Palesa Bell, Palesa Moletsane, Paul Motswi, Rebone Nketle, Regina Mondli, Rochelle Adams, Roisin Elizabeth Drysdale, Saiqa Mullick, Tlalane Rasemetse, Tumelo Lekoro, Vuyane Mithane, Wiseman Moloi, Zandile Mthembu

Uganda: Anna Rose Kulume, Andrew Kazibwe, Andrew Mijumbi Ojok, Carolyne Agwau Akello, Caxton Maboni, Charles Abura, Christine Harriet Namugerwa, Daniel Kilama, Elly Mweshezi, Fiona Magololo Mutesi, Herbert Kadama, Immaculate Alwedo, Ivan Segawa, Jovia Muhindo, Joyce Akanyo, Lazarus Oucul, Leah Wamala Najjemba, Lilian Tutegyereize, Madelena Angiro, Nathan Tumwesigye, Peter Mudiope, Prima Maria Niwampeire, Privah Twijukye, Ronald Asiimwe, Rubuna Nagai, Susan Awino, Teddy Atianga, Twaha Nangoli Mafabi, Vianney John Kigongo

Zimbabwe: Adatia Chivafa, Arot Muleya, Bekithemba Ndlovu, Charity Ncube, Definate Nhamo, Emily Gwavava, Getrude Ncube, Givemore Machimbidzofa, Hlozokuhle Ndiweni, Imelda Mahaka, Jacqueline Kabongo, Joseph Murungu, Kimberly Tangi, Lindiwe Khumalo, Mancer Marime, Munyaradzi Dobbie, Natalie Kruse-Levy, Nobukhosi Moyo, Nothando Ndlovu, Owen Mugurungi, Patience Matambo, Rufaro Manyanga, Ruramai Mudzingwa, Sanele Ngulube, Sharleen Tatenda Jonga, Sibusisiwe Sibanda, Takudzwa Mamvuto, Wanzirai Makoni, Wilbert Ishemunyoro, Yvonne Ndoga

Global Team: Alisa Alano, Amy Lynn Heaps, Ashley Mayo, Ashley Vij, Ayne Worku, Cindy Jacobson, Courtney McGuire, Diantha Pillay, Doris Marwanga, Douglas Taylor, Elizabeth Irungu, Emily Donaldson, Emily Dorward, Emily Namey, Emily Wendel, Ginny Fonner, Haley Sisel, Jason Reed, Jill Peterson, Kate Brickson, Katherine Kripke, Katie Bunge, Katie Schwartz, Katie Williams, Kristine Torjesen, Kyria Louis-Charles, Lara Lorenzetti, Lauren Kudrick, Lauren Rutherford, Leonard Solai, Lisa Noguchi, Maggie Czarnogorski, Marga Eichleay, Marie Shoen, Mark Conlon, Martha Larson, Mary Latka, Morgan Garcia, Mu-Tien Lee, Nanlesta Pilgrim, Nilufar Rakhmanova, Piotr Budnik, Rose Wilcher, Sarah Salinger, Steven Forsythe, Tara McClure, Tatenda Yemeke, Ted Livant, Urvi Parikh



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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people and institutions for their contributions to this research: Study participants, health providers and study staff at participating sites, ministries of health in participating countries, USAID HQ and country missions.



MOSAIC is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this presentation are the responsibility of MOSAIC and do not necessarily reflect the views of PEPFAR, USAID, or the U.S. Government. MOSAIC is a global cooperative agreement (#7200AA21CA00011) led by FHI 360, with core partners Wits RHI, Pangaea Zimbabwe, LVCT Health, Jhpiego, and AVAC.

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