Abstract Supplement

HIV Glasgow - Virtual
5–8 October 2020

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Community Initiatives

P103

Awareness and perception of accuracy of the Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U) message in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Italy and correlation with the level of confidence in reference physicians

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Background: Recent studies confirmed no risk of HIV sexual transmission with undetectable HIV-RNA (<200 copies/mL), leading to worldwide campaign "U=U" (undetectable=untransmittable). Purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceived accuracy of this message among PLWHA, HIV-negative people with sexual risky behaviours (PWSRB) and infectious diseases physicians, to guide subsequent efforts and implementation of HIV prevention strategies.

Materials and methods: An Italian nationwide web survey among ICONA cohort centres, community-based voluntary test & counselling centres and fast-track cities websites has been conducted. Three different anonymous questionnaires (for physicians, PLWHA and PWSRB) were set up. In this analysis we explored the awareness of U=U ("have you ever heard of") and the perception of accuracy of U=U [Likert scale from 1 = completely inaccurate (low) to 4 = completely accurate (high)]. Logistic regression models have been fitted to investigate factors associated with the binary outcomes (i) awareness of U=U (Y/N) and (ii) perceived high accuracy of U=U (Y/N).
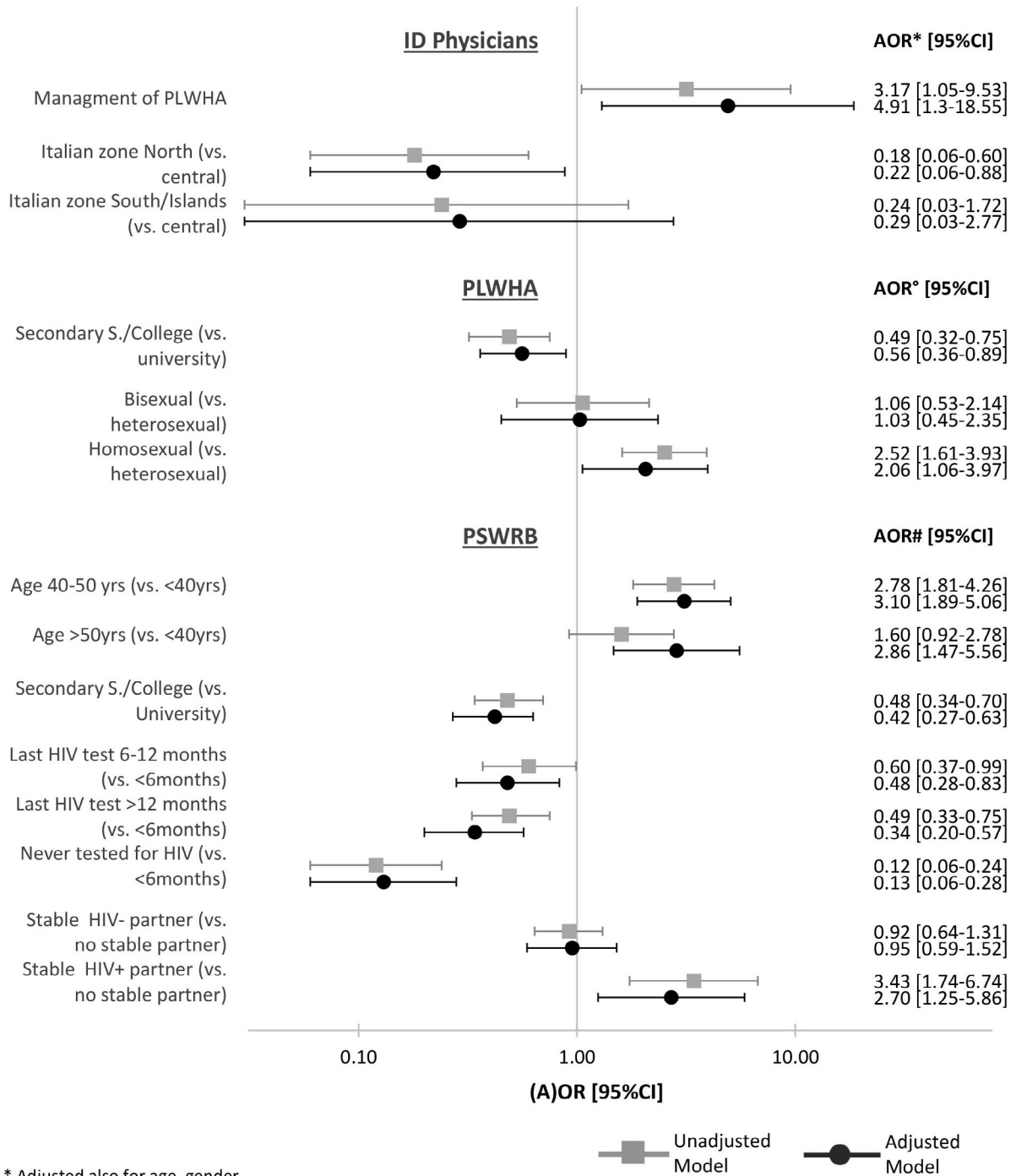
Results: One thousand, one hundred and twenty-one participants filled the questionnaires: 397 PLWHA, 90 physicians, 634 PWSRB. Participants' characteristics are shown in Table 1. Awareness of U=U message has been reported in 74%, 46% and 92% of PLWHA, PWSRB and physicians. Accuracy of U=U message has been reported as 'high' in 80% of PLWHA, 66% of PWSRB and 79% of physicians. Physicians perceived that 11% of PLWHA have a high perception of U=U; 34% of PLWHA reported a definitive positive messages received from physicians. Among PLWHA, factors associated with the awareness of U=U were level of education (university vs lower AOR 1.77, 95% CI 1.03 to 3.04), being MSM/bisexual (vs heterosexual AOR 3.16, 95% CI 1.03 to 3.04), being on cART for five to ten years (vs < 5 years AOR 2.71, 95% CI 1.32 to 5.55) and age (40 to 50 years vs < 40 years AOR 0.47, 95% CI 0.24 to 0.93). Factors associated with perception of accuracy of message in the three groups are reported in Figure 1.

Abstract P103-Table 1. Participants' characteristics

	ID physicians (N = 90)	PLWHA (N = 397)	PWSRB (N = 634)
Age, years, n (%)			
<40	49 (54.4)	122 (30.79)	461 (72.7)
40 to 50	18 (20.0)	124 (31.2)	110 (17.3)
>50	23 (25.6)	151 (38.0)	63 (9.9)
Gender, male, n (%)	37 (41.1)	324 (81.6)	431 (68.0)
Nationality, Italian, n (%)	N/A	375 (94.5)	610 (96.4)
Italian geographical zone, n (%)			
Northern Italy	46 (51.1)	235 (59.2)	415 (65.7)
Central Italy	38 (42.2)	117 (29.5)	115 (18.2)
Southern Italy/Islands	6 (6.7)	45 (11.3)	102 (16.1)
Education, university, n (%)	90 (100.0)	157 (39.6)	392 (61.8)
Management of PLWHA, Yes, n (%)	73 (81.1)	N/A	N/A
Years of management of PLWHA, n (%)			
<10 years	39 (53.4)	N/A	N/A
10 to 20 years	15 (20.6)	N/A	N/A
>20 years	19 (26.0)	N/A	N/A
Number of PLWHA in care, n (%)			
<100	36 (49.3)	N/A	N/A
100 to 400	15 (20.6)	N/A	N/A
>400	22 (30.1)	N/A	N/A
Years with HIV infection			
<5 years	N/A	112 (28.2)	N/A
5 to 10 years	N/A	98 (24.7)	N/A
>10 years	N/A	187 (47.1)	N/A
Years of cART			
<5 years	N/A	125 (31.5)	N/A
10 to 5 years	N/A	113 (28.5)	N/A
>10 years	N/A	159 (40.0)	N/A
HIV-RNA undetectable, yes, n (%)	N/A	372 (95.6)	N/A
Number of sexual partners, median (IQR)	N/A	2 (1 to 10)	2 (1 to 10)
Sexual orientation, n (%)			
Heterosexual	N/A	131 (33.0)	224 (35.3)
Bisexual	N/A	41 (10.3)	42 (6.6)
Homosexual	N/A	225 (56.7)	368 (58.0)
Stable sexual partner, n (%)			
No	N/A	190 (47.9)	322 (50.8)
Yes, HIV-positive	N/A	53 (13.3)	40 (6.3)
Yes, HIV-negative	N/A	154 (38.8)	272 (42.9)
Last HIV test, n (%)			
<6 months	N/A	N/A	242 (38.2)
6 to 12 months	N/A	N/A	95 (15.0)
>12 months	N/A	N/A	176 (27.8)
Never done	N/A	N/A	121 (19.1)

ID, infectious diseases; N/A, not applicable; PLWHA, people living with HIV/AIDS; PWSRB, people with sexual risky behaviours.

Conclusions: Although selection bias of web surveys cannot be overlooked, results highlight a low concordance between awareness and perception of accuracy in PLWHA and physicians, suggesting still insufficient certainty. More efforts should be implemented to spread the U=U message among subgroups who might benefit from targeted educational campaigns. Dissemination of the message among PWSRB is far from being efficaciously implemented and should represent a priority for increasing knowledge and decreasing HIV stigma.

ID Physicians   AOR* [95%CI]

Managment of PLWHA   3.17 [1.05-9.53]
                                                     4.91 [1.3-18.55]

Italian zone North (vs.   0.18 [0.06-0.60]
central)   0.22 [0.06-0.88]
Italian zone South/Islands   0.24 [0.03-1.72]
(vs. central)   0.29 [0.03-2.77]

PLWHA   AOR° [95%CI]

Secondary S./College (vs.   0.49 [0.32-0.75]
university)   0.56 [0.36-0.89]

Bisexual (vs.   1.06 [0.53-2.14]
heterosexual)   1.03 [0.45-2.35]
Homosexual (vs.   2.52 [1.61-3.93]
heterosexual)   2.06 [1.06-3.97]

PSWRB   AOR# [95%CI]

Age 40-50 yrs (vs. <40yrs)   2.78 [1.81-4.26]
                                                     3.10 [1.89-5.06]

Age >50yrs (vs. <40yrs)   1.60 [0.92-2.78]
                                                     2.86 [1.47-5.56]

Secondary S./College (vs.   0.48 [0.34-0.70]
University)   0.42 [0.27-0.63]

Last HIV test 6-12 months   0.60 [0.37-0.99]
(vs. <6months)   0.48 [0.28-0.83]
Last HIV test >12 months   0.49 [0.33-0.75]
(vs. <6months)   0.34 [0.20-0.57]
Never tested for HIV (vs.   0.12 [0.06-0.24]
<6months)   0.13 [0.06-0.28]

Stable HIV- partner (vs.   0.92 [0.64-1.31]
no stable partner)   0.95 [0.59-1.52]
Stable HIV+ partner (vs.   3.43 [1.74-6.74]
no stable partner)   2.70 [1.25-5.86]

0.10   1.00   10.00

(A)OR [95%CI]

■ Unadjusted Model   ● Adjusted Model

* Adjusted also for age, gender
° Adjusted also for age, gender, sexual preferences, years on cART, stable partnership, n. of partners in the last year, geographical site
Adjusted also for gender, sexual preferences, n. of partner in the last year, geographical site

Abstract P103-Figure 1. Factors associated with perceiving accuracy of U=U message as 'high' identified by multivariable logistic regression analyses separately for each of the questionnaire recipient groups.