

HIV STATUS IN A COHORT OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS: FAR TO MEET 95:95:95 GOALS

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BACKGROUND

Key populations including **female sex workers** (FSW) are at high risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STI).

Barriers including stigma and discrimination **limit access** to sexual and reproductive health services, HIV testing, prevention and treatment among FSW.

There is scarce information in Argentina of this population.

We **aimed** to describe the baseline sexual activity, HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) use and knowledge, HIV status and the frequency of prior HIV testing in a cohort of cisgender (CGW) and transgender (TGW) FSW.

METHODS

“**MAS por Nosotras**” is a prospective cohort of CGW and TGW FSW in Buenos Aires, Argentina built through a collaboration between a non-governmental research organization, the local Ministry of health and a Canadian research team.



At cohort visits, medical assessment for HIV/STI and psychosocial interviews are conducted. In those with HIV, viral load (VL) and CD4 cell count were performed.



Descriptive analysis from the baseline visit of the participants is presented.

RESULTS

From June 2023-March 2024 → N = 200 FSW enrolled

TGW = 99 and CGW = 101

PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

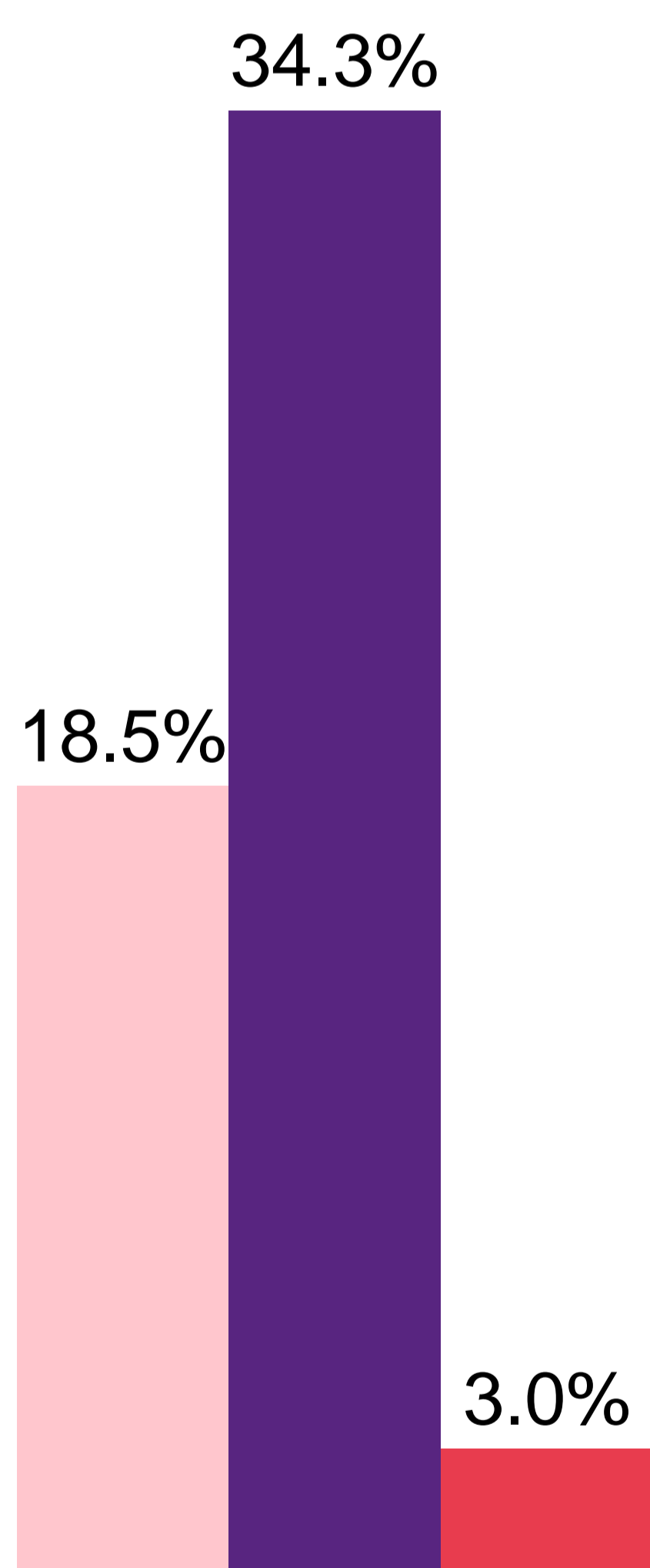
AGE (median)

TGW 29 years (IQR 24-39)	CGW 36 years (IQR 30-47)
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SEX WORK			
	TGW (N=99)	CGW (N=101)	p
Age at sex work initiation (median [IQR])	18 [16-21]	22 [19-30]	<0.001
Years on sex work (median [IQR])	12 [6.5-19]	10 [5-19]	NS
>20 sexual partners in the last month (%)	44.8%	22.8%	<0.001
Condomless anal or vaginal intercourses (%)	56.6%	52.5%	NS
Street as work venue (%)	79%	31%	<0.001
Sex work as main source of income (%)	95%	87%	0.083

IQR: Interquartile range

HIV PREVALENCE



5 new HIV diagnosis
(4 TGW and 1 CGW)

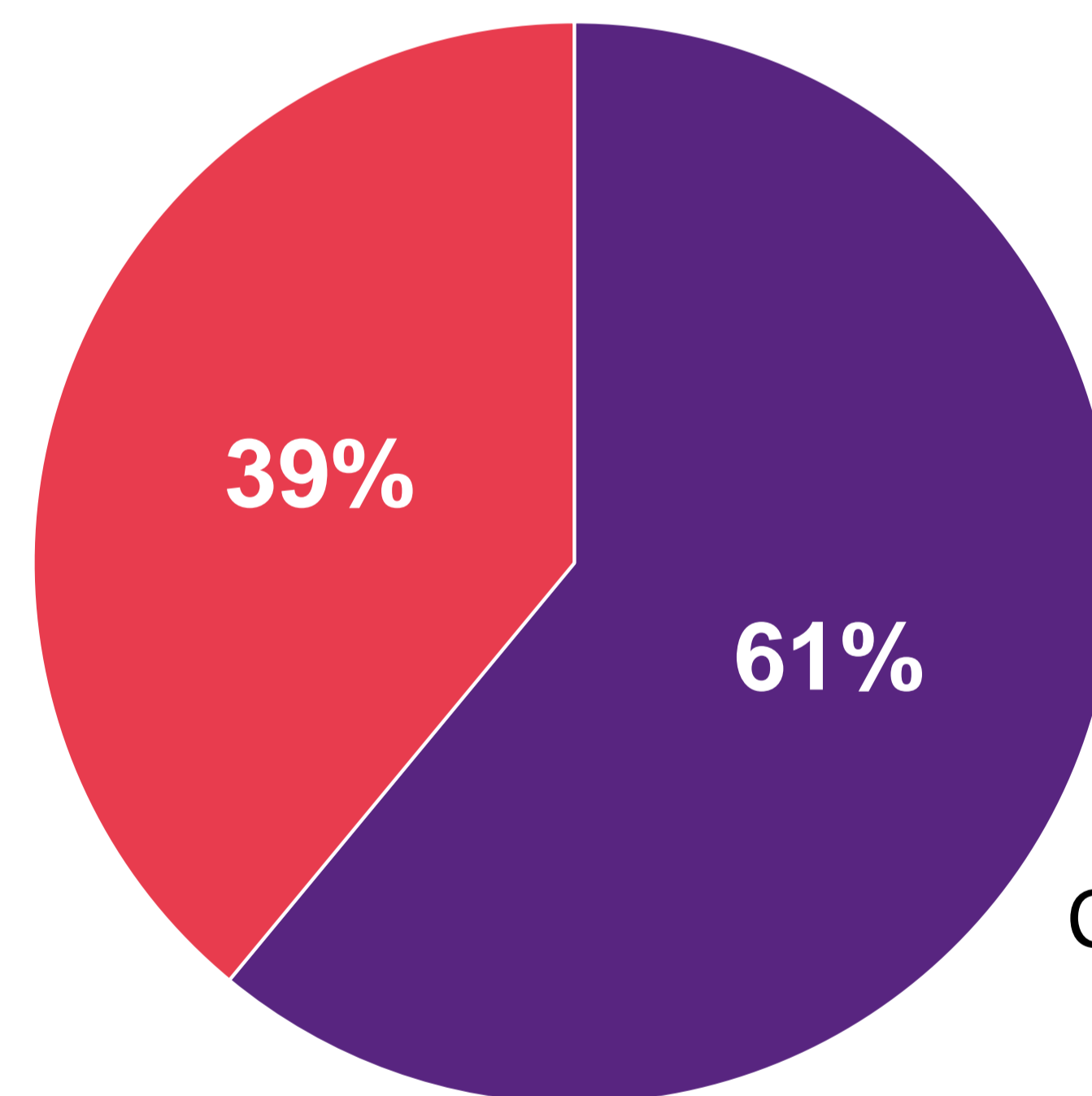
PARTICIPANTS WITH HIV

Detectable VL

VL (median): 11371 copies/ul
(IQR: 235-24210)
CD4 (median): 305 cells/ul
(IQR: 238-716)



50% abandoned treatment
17% on stable ART
17% never started treatment
8% on ART with irregular adherence
8% recently started treatment



Undetectable VL
CD4 (median): 848 cells/ul
(IQR: 646-1075)

PARTICIPANTS WITHOUT HIV

	TGW	CGW
Reported never having tested for HIV	5.7 %	18.4%
Time since last HIV test (median-IQR)	5 months (IQR: 2-22)	20 months (IQR: 8-59)
On HIV PrEP	16.7%	3.1%
Had previously used HIV PrEP	14.2%	1%
Reported knowledge about HIV PrEP	50%	18.8%
HIV PrEP acceptance	55.6%	30.5%

CONCLUSIONS

Knowledge of HIV status and HIV PrEP was low, especially in **CGW**. Although **TGW** tested for HIV more frequently, HIV prevalence was **considerably higher and the viral control, suboptimal**.

Our findings highlight the need to enhance strategies to improve HIV prevention and treatment in FSW with a **gender specific focus** in order to reach the 95:95:95 targets.

Partial data was presented at 5th HIV Research for Prevention Conference, Lima, Peru, October, 2024