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1 2 The HIV care cascade among female sex workers in Zimbabwe: 3 results of a population-based survey from the Sisters 4 Antiretroviral therapy Programme for Prevention of HIV, an 5 **Integrated Response (SAPPH-IRe) Trial** 6 7 Frances M Cowan MD<sup>1,2</sup>§, Calum Davey MSc<sup>3\*</sup>, Elizabeth Fearon PhD<sup>3\*</sup>, Phillis Mushati MSc<sup>2</sup>, 8 9 Jeffrey Dirawo<sup>2</sup>, Valentina Cambiano MSc<sup>1</sup>, Sue Napierala Mavedzenge DPhil<sup>4</sup>, Dagmar Hanisch MPH<sup>5</sup>, Ramona Wong-Gruenwald MPH<sup>6</sup>, Milton Chemhuru MD MPH<sup>7</sup>, Nyasha Masuka MBChB 10 MPH<sup>7</sup>, Karin Hatzold MD<sup>8</sup>, Owen Mugurungi MD<sup>7</sup>, Joanna Busza MSc<sup>9</sup>, Andrew Phillips PhD<sup>1</sup>, 11 12 James R Hargreaves PhD<sup>3</sup> 13 14 1 Department of International Public Health, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Liverpool, UK 15 2 Centre for Sexual Health & HIV/AIDS Research (CeSHHAR) Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe 16 3 Centre for Evaluation, Department of Social and Environmental Health Research, Public Health and 17 Policy, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK 18 4 Women's Global Health Imperative, RTI International, San Francisco, California, United States of 19 America 20 5 United Nations Population Fund, Harare, Zimbabwe 21 6 Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Harare, Zimbabwe 22 7 Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Harare, Zimbabwe 23 8 Population Services International Global, Harare, Zimbabwe 24 9 Department of Population Studies, Epidemiology and Population Health, London School of Hygiene 25 and Tropical Medicine, London, UK 26 27 **Correspondence to:** 28 **Prof Frances Cowan** 29 Centre for Sexual Health & HIV/AIDS Research (CeSHHAR) Zimbabwe 30 9 Monmouth Road 31 Avondale West, Harare 32 Zimbabwe

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61	the cos	t of PSI Zimbabwe to provide ART and PrEP to sex workers as part of the trial. We have
62	receive	d a donation of Truvada for PrEP use for the trial from Gilead.

64	Introduction: Female sex workers (FSW) in sub-Saharan Africa have a higher prevalence of HIV
65	than other women of reproductive age. Social, legal, and structural barriers influence their
66	access to care. Little is known about the HIV diagnosis and care cascade in most countries in
67	southern Africa. We aimed to describe the HIV diagnosis and care cascade among FSW in
68	Zimbabwe.
69	Methods: We conducted cross-sectional respondent driven sampling (RDS) surveys of FSW in
70	14 sites across Zimbabwe as the baseline for a cluster-randomised controlled trial investigating
71	a combination HIV prevention and care package. We administered a questionnaire, tested
72	women for HIV and measured viral load. We report the mean, minimum and maximum RDS-2
73	weighted site values.
74	Results: The survey included 2,722 women, approximately 200 per site. The mean HIV
75	prevalence was 57.5% (42.8-79.2 site minimum and maximum). Of HIV positive women, 64.0%
76	(51.6-73.7) were aware of their status, 67.7% (53.4-84.1) of these reported taking ART and
77	77.8% (64.4-90.8) of these had a suppressed HIV viral load (<1000 copies/ml). Among all HIV
78	positive women, 49.5% had a viral load < 1000 copies/ml.
79	Conclusions: While the majority of HIV positive women aware of their status are accessing
80	ART, 36.0% of HIV positive women are unaware of their status and 29.3% of all FSW have an
81	unsuppressed HIV viral load. Investigation and investment into models of testing, treatment
82	and care are necessary to reach UNAIDS targets for HIV elimination.
83	
84	The trial is registered with the Pan African Clinical Trials Registry (PACTR201312000722390).

**Abstract** 

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85	Acknowledgements
86	The Sisters Antiretroviral therapy Programme for Prevention of HIV: an Integrated Response
87	(SAPPH-IRe) trial has been funded by UNFPA via Zimbabwe's Integrated Support Fund which
88	receives funds from DfID, Irish Aid and Swedish SIDA. A small amount of funding for survey
89	work is from GIZ. USAID support the cost of PSI Zimbabwe to provide ART and PrEP to sex
90	workers as part of the trial. We have received a donation of Truvada for PrEP use for the trial
91	from Gilead Sciences.
92	
93	Competing Interests
94	Dr. Phillips reports personal fees from Gilead Sciences, personal fees from GSK Vaccines, and
95	having served on an advisory board for AbbVie, outside the submitted work.
96	Dr. Cambiano reports personal fees from Merck Sharp & Dohmed Limited, outside the
97	submitted work.
,,	Submitted Work
98	Other authors declare no competing interests.
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400	Audh au Gantathauta
<ul><li>100</li><li>101</li></ul>	Author Contributions  Frances Cowan is the principal investigator of the trial, oversees trial design and
102	implementation, data interpretation and writing of manuscript.
102	implementation, data interpretation and writing of manageript.
103	Calum Davey conducted data analysis, produced tables and figures, contributed to data
104	interpretation and contributed to drafting and finalising the paper.
105	Elizabeth Fearon conducted data analysis, produced tables and figures, contributed to data
106	interpretation and contributed to drafting and finalising the paper.
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107	Phillis Mushati oversaw data collection, reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
108	Jeffrey Dirawo oversaw data management, reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
109	Valentina Cambiano contributed to planning the study, edited and approved the final
110	manuscript.

111	approved the manuscript.
<ul><li>113</li><li>114</li></ul>	Dagmar Hanisch contributed to planning the study, reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
115	Karin Hatzold contributed to planning the study, reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
116 117	Owen Mugurungi, Nyasha Masuka and Milton Chemhuru contributed to planning the study, reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
118	Joanna Busza contributed to planning the study, reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
119	Andrew Phillips contributed to planning the study, edited and approved the final version.
120	James Hargreaves helped plan the analysis and contributed to drafting and finalising the paper.
121	
122	All authors have approved the final manuscript.
123	
124	Introduction
125	In sub-Saharan Africa, female sex workers (FSW) have high HIV incidence and prevalence and
126	therefore are in particular need of good access to effective HIV testing, prevention and
127	treatment services[1]. In sub-Saharan Africa female sex workers are estimated to have 13.5
128	times higher odds of HIV infection than in the general population of adult women [1].
129	However, FSW are a marginalised group, sex work is illegal in many countries including
130	Zimbabwe[2], and FSW are often stigmatised by communities and health workers[3, 4].
131	Typically, FSW are also highly mobile[5]. Designing service delivery approaches that meet the
132	needs of this population is therefore complex but urgently needed.
133	There is currently little information about the continuum of care from diagnosis to virological
134	suppression (the HIV care cascade) amongst FSW with which to guide programming. Previous
135	studies of FSW in sub-Saharan Africa indicate that antiretroviral therapy (ART) can be provided
136	to FSW[6] at costs comparable to that of provision in the general population[7]. A recent
137	systematic review and meta-analysis of antiretroviral uptake, adherence and outcomes among

138 FSW found that current ART use among HIV positive FSW was 39% (95% CI 29-48%), but noted 139 a concerning lack of published data available[8]. Another review of the provision of sexual and 140 reproductive health services for FSW in Africa found little emphasis among programmes on 141 access to antiretroviral treatment and support for adherence[9]. While there is some evidence 142 to guide the design of HIV prevention programmes for FSW in Africa, little is known about the 143 best means to improve testing, access and adherence to ART and effective use of pre-exposure 144 prophylaxis[10, 11]. 145 In 2009, in response to a situational analysis conducted among FSW by Zimbabwe's National 146 AIDS Council and partners[12], the 'Sisters with a Voice' programme was established in five 147 sites, and has since expanded to 36 sites covering all the provinces of Zimbabwe. Services 148 provided are based on guidance from the World Health Organisation[13] and include HIV 149 testing and counselling, sexual and reproductive health services, condom provision and health 150 education supported by trained peer educators and a programme of community mobilisation. 151 Results of a respondent driven sampling (RDS) survey conducted in three towns in 2011[14], 152 along with qualitative work[15], suggested that FSW in Zimbabwe were poorly engaged with 153 HIV prevention and care services. 154 In response to this finding, we launched the Sisters Antiretroviral Programme for Prevention of 155 HIV – an Integrated Response (SAPPH-IRe) trial, a cluster-randomised controlled trial 156 conducted in 14 sites around Zimbabwe (7 matched-pairs). The aim is to determine the 157 effectiveness and cost effectiveness of an enhanced community-based intervention to increase 158 uptake, retention and adherence to antiretroviral-based prevention and therapy among FSW. 159 Outcomes were assessed at a population level in all 14 communities among FSW recruited to 160 RDS surveys at baseline (December 2013), and will also be assessed at endline (April-May 161 2016). 162 Aiming to contribute to our scant knowledge of the HIV diagnosis and care cascade amongst 163 FSW in sub-Saharan Africa, this paper describes the HIV diagnosis and care cascade at 14 sites 164 around Zimbabwe at the baseline of the SAPPH-IRe trial. Data are presented on socio-165 demographic characteristics, HIV prevalence, ART coverage, viral suppression and the 166 proportion of all FSW with unsuppressed HIV viral load: the primary endpoint for the SAPPH-167 IRe trial.

## Methods

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169 **Study Population and Setting** 170 Fourteen of the 36 sites where the 'Sisters' services are provided are included in the SAPPH-IRe 171 trial. These sites were purposively selected to reflect different sex work location types (e.g. 172 town, growth point, colliery/army base), were locations of adequate size (85-300 FSW 173 attending clinics annually) and were geographically disparate to minimise contamination 174 during the trial. Women were eligible if they were aged 18 or over, had exchanged in sex for 175 money or gifts in the preceding 30 days, and had lived at the site for at least the previous six 176 months. 177 **Data Collection** 178 We conducted respondent driven sampling (RDS)[16] surveys of FSW using identical 179 procedures in each of the 14 sites. We used RDS because it was unfeasible to assemble a 180 sampling frame of the intended target population; it has been recommended for research 181 amongst hard-to-reach populations[17]; we successfully conducted similar RDS surveys of FSW 182 in 3 locations in 2011[14], and sex work in these settings is not conducted primarily within 183 brothels or set venues making time-location sampling methods less appropriate. In each site 184 we first conducted 2-3 days of geographic and social mapping, including informal discussions 185 with trained peer educators, healthcare staff, and community informants. This formative work 186 informed specific criteria for purposely selected "seed" women to ensure that all sub-187 populations within the site's sex worker population were represented and helped determine 188 how many of these seeds should be selected[18]. 189 In line with RDS methodology, seed participants in each site were interviewed and given two 190 recruitment coupons to pass on to their sex worker peers. Women were uniformly advised to 191 recruit other sex workers whose name they knew and who knew their name, who had not 192 already enrolled in the study and who met the study eligibility criteria. Interviewers used 193 screening questions to confirm as far as possible that women given coupons met these criteria 194 when they presented for interview. Six seeds were recruited in the smaller sites, while in four 195 larger sites eight seeds were recruited. When women receiving the coupons attended for the 196 interview ("recruits") they were also given two coupons to give out to women they knew who 197 worked as FSW in that location. Coupons were coded such that recruiter/recruitee 198 relationships could be tracked and unique IDs recorded. In all 14 sites a maximum of five

iterations, or 'waves', of this process were performed (6 waves, including the initial seeds). We

200 aimed to recruit 200 FSW per site to give adequate power to detect the intervention effect at 201 follow-up[19]. In line with other RDS surveys, women were reimbursed for participating in the 202 survey (\$5) and for recruiting eligible participants (\$2 for each recruited). All participants gave 203 informed consent to participate after receiving information about the study from trained 204 interviewers and being given the opportunity to ask questions. 205 Five teams of trained researchers undertook data collection between 13 November and 20 206 December 2013. Interviewer-administered questionnaire data was collected onto tablet 207 computers and directly loaded into a master database using a wireless internet connection in 208 the field. Questionnaires included information on demographics, sex work, sexual behaviour 209 and condom use, HIV testing history, ART use, stigma, experience of violence, relationships 210 with other sex workers, and use of sexual and reproductive health services. We also collected 211 data to determine personal network size, or 'degree', for RDS estimation. In our survey, the 212 degree was the number of FSW a participant reported knowing personally, whose name they 213 knew and who knew theirs, who were at least 18 years old, lived at the site, and whom the 214 participant would consider recruiting to the study. 215 All women had a finger prick blood sample collected in the form of a dried blood spot (DBS) for 216 detection of HIV antibody (AniLabsytems EIA kit (AniLabsystems Ltd, OyToilette 3, FIN-01720, 217 Finland)). Blood samples were air-dried on filter papers and stored at room temperature, then 218 transported biweekly to the Flowcytometry Laboratory in Harare. If HIV antibodies were 219 detected then the DBS sample was tested for HIV viral load using NucliSENS EasyQ HIV-1 v2.0, 220 both to confirm HIV positive status and to quantify the viral load. For samples with a positive 221 HIV antibody test, but an undetectable viral load, a second confirmatory ELISA was performed 222 (Enzygnost Anti-HIV 1/2 Plus ELISA (Germany)). At two trial sites, plasma samples were 223 collected in addition to DBS and tested in parallel using NucliSENS EasyQ HIV-1 v2.0, to permit 224 validation of the use of DBS for viral load quantification [20]. 225 The Medical Research Council Zimbabwe, University College London, and the London School of 226 Hygiene and Tropical Medicine gave ethical approval for the SAPPH-IRe trial, including the 227 baseline data collection and analysis. The trial was also registered with the Research Council of 228 Zimbabwe, the Pan African Clinical Trials Registry (PACTR201312000722390) and was 229 approved by the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe.

231	We follow the recommendations of the STROBE-RDS guidelines in reporting our study[21].
232	First, we described the sample recruited. A limitation of RDS is that it is difficult to describe
233	non-participation rates since no sample frame is present, and we did not conduct 'exit
234	interviews' of women who had distributed coupons to ascertain how many of their peers
235	refused to take part. We calculated cluster-summaries for key socio-demographic
236	characteristics of the sample. We calculated and report the mean of the 14 cluster-level RDS-2
237	weighted summaries and the range of estimates across clusters (minimum and maximum).
238	Both as a total and summarised across clusters, we described the proportion of participants
239	with suppressed HIV viral load, (<1000 copies/ml, as per WHO guidelines[22, 23]), and steps of
240	the HIV care cascade underlying this: the proportion who were found to be HIV positive; the
241	proportion who reported via questionnaire previously testing positive (i.e. knew their status);
242	the proportion who reported being on ART, and the proportion who had a viral load of <1000
243	copies/ml. We described these estimates both as proportions of the previous step on the
244	cascade and as proportions of the total of women testing HIV positive.
245	We used 'RDS-2' to conduct all analyses, which uses the 'Volz-Heckathorn' estimator[24] and
246	has been found to be less biased than previous estimators[25]. RDS-2 is based on estimating
247	the inclusion probabilities of each survey participant, assuming the recruitment process can be
248	modelled as a 'random walk' over the social network of FSW. Within this model, the
249	probability that each participant will be included is approximated as the inverse of the
250	reported degree. Estimates were calculated in Stata 12 using the 'rds' analysis package[26],
251	which removes seeds from the proportion estimates.
252	RDS-2 estimation assumes that recruitment chains progress such that final estimates are no
253	longer dependent on the characteristics of the seeds, that recruitment does not become
254	confined within sub-groups of the FSW population ('bottlenecks'), and assumes with-
255	replacement sampling even when women cannot participate more than once in practice[25].
256	We assessed these assumptions and their potential for bias on estimates of HIV prevalence
257	and suppressed viral load for each site, using plots of the convergence of HIV and viral
258	suppression estimates over sample waves ('convergence plots') and plots of estimate
259	convergence by seed ('bottleneck plots'). We also examined the difference between RDS-2
260	estimates and estimates produced using the RDS 'successive sampling' estimator[27] for a
261	range of possible population sizes to assess the bias resulting from assuming with-replacement

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Data analysis

sampling. These analyses were guided by published advice about RDS diagnostics[28] and used the 'rds' package for the R statistical language[29]. Details of the diagnostic methods and results are given in Appendix 1.

### Results

#### **RDS** recruitment and estimation

In total 2,722 participants were recruited over six waves in 14 sites. Of these participants, 90 were seeds, of whom 62 (68.9%) were HIV positive and 29 (32.2%) had HIV viral load  $\geq$  1000 copies/ml. The number of non-seed "recruits" varied from 147 to 212 per site. There were an additional 15 participants from 8 sites who were missing recruiter information and who were treated as seeds and therefore dropped from the estimation.

Estimates for the proportion of FSW with suppressed viral load and for HIV prevalence appeared to converge well by the final sample wave for all sites except one for HIV prevalence and two for viral load, and there was little evidence of recruitment becoming confined within sub-groups from any site (see Appendix 1).

#### Characteristics of female sex workers

Participants were aged between 18 and 65, with a mean age of 31 years (minimum site mean of 29 and maximum of 34). Approximately one third of women had no or only primary education, another third had completed Forms 1-3 and the final third had completed at least Form 4 (see Table 1). Very few of the women were married (0.8% overall unweighted, the proportion was too small to calculate RDS weights) and 61.9% (range 46.4-70.6% across sites) were separated or divorced. The majority of women (53.5%) reported initiating sex work by 24 years old, with 17.4% (8.5 – 25.9) reporting having started sex work before they were 18 years old. In total 8.2% reported having no clients in the past week, 49.9% of women reported having between 1 and 5 clients per week; and 13.2% reported having 16 or more. Just under half of the women in each cluster (45.0%) were food insecure (food insecurity was indicated by any of the following: being unable to eat two meals a day; sometimes going to bed hungry; going an entire day without eating in the last week). More than a quarter of women (26.7%) had worked at another geographic location in the previous 12 months, while 52.2% had lived in their current location for six or more years. 61.4% of the women reported good or very good relations with other FSW.

293	Violence from intimate partners was the most common form of interpersonal violence ever
294	experienced (40.3%), followed by violence from clients (27.7%). Violence from police in the
295	previous year was 9.7% overall, though in one location it was 19.5%.
296	
297	The majority of participants reported having previously tested for HIV (91.1%), and of those
298	who were HIV negative 70.5% (52.7-88.8) reported having tested for HIV in the previous six
299	months.
300 301	HIV and the diagnosis and care cascade  The HIV care cascade for HIV positive FSW is described in Figure 1. HIV prevalence amongst
302	FSW was estimated to be 57.5%, ranging from 42.8% to 79.2% across sites.
303	Among those who tested HIV positive, an average of 64.0% (51.6 – 73.7) in each site were
304	aware of their status, i.e. they reported a previous positive HIV test. Of those aware of their
305	positive status, 67.7% (53.4 – 84.1) reported taking ART, which was 43.3% (32.3 – 54.0) of all
306	those who tested HIV positive in the study. Across sites, an average of $77.8\%$ (64.4 – 90.8) of
307	women who were on ART had a viral load < 1000 copies/ml. Women on ART with viral loads
308	<1000 copies/mL were 33.7% (range $36.5-62.2$ ) of all those testing HIV positive. An additional
309	15.8% (range 12.6 – 16.6) of those testing positive had a viral load <1,000 copies/ml, despite
310	not reporting being on ART. Of all HIV positive FSW, 43.3% (32.3 – 54.0) were on ART and
311	49.5% (36.5-62.2) had viral loads of <1000 copies/mL.
312	When considering all FSW as the denominator, there were an estimated 29.3%
313	(18.9-42.3) of women who had an unsuppressed HIV viral load of ≥1000
314	copies/mL.
315	
316	Discussion
317	We analysed data from 2,722 FSW recruited in 14 sites in Zimbabwe. HIV prevalence was very
318	high (mean 57.5% across sites, ranging 42.8-79.2%). While recent HIV testing and access to
319	ART were relatively common, still some 36.0% of HIV positive FSW did not report that they
320	were positive in the research interview (26.3-48.4). The majority of women who tested HIV
321	positive and reported being aware of their status reported accessing ART (67.7%) and of those,
322	77.8% had a viral load <1000 copies/ml. However, overall only 49.5% of all HIV positive women

323 had a viral load <1000 copies/ml, in part because many were unaware of their status. 324 Significant and rapid progress is needed to reduce HIV infection rates, increase HIV status 325 awareness and improve overall levels of viral suppression. 326 We undertook an ambitious field study to collect baseline data and test the feasibility of our 327 proposed approach to the trial endline data collection. We have shown that it was feasible to 328 rapidly recruit approximately 200 FSW per site in 14 sites across Zimbabwe using RDS 329 methodology. Our findings make an important contribution to the sparse literature on the HIV 330 diagnosis and care cascade among FSW in sub-Saharan Africa[8]. We have been able to 331 measure women having unsuppressed viral load as a proportion of all HIV positive sex workers, 332 not only among those accessing ART, which is important given that approximately one third of 333 HIV positive FSW were unaware of their status. Sampling approaches such as ours provide a 334 key means for assessing how close we are to the 90:90:90 targets [30] in a given population or 335 setting. 336 All sampling methods for hard-to-reach populations have limitations, and RDS is no exception. 337 The estimation makes many assumptions about the recruitment process and the social 338 networks of sex workers. Previous mapping of sex workers in Zimbabwe suggests they are well 339 networked [14][31] Critical is that appropriate statistical techniques are used though there 340 remains debate about methods of analysis. We have undertaken a series of in-depth diagnostic 341 tests to determine the validity of RDS among female sex workers in these surveys, and find 342 little evidence that there were major issues with recruitment. We present diagnostics in 343 Appendix 1. However, as in all applications of RDS in hidden populations it was not possible for 344 us to empirically verify the extent to which the sample we recruited reflects the characteristics 345 of FSWs working in the 14 sites. A major strength of our study was that we adopted identical 346 field procedures in each of the sites, strengthening our capacity to compare findings across 347 them. 348 Our estimate of viral load for HIV positive FSW was based on analysis of dried blood spot 349 samples. While plasma analysis is normally considered the gold-standard approach, DBS 350 appeared to be an acceptable method for viral load monitoring using the NucliSENS assay, and 351 we estimated high DBS sensitivity compared to plasma 'gold-standard' (sensitivity=87.4% and 352 specificity=96.8%)[20].

353 Coverage of ART among HIV positive FSW was similar at 43.4% (range 32.3 – 54.0) to the 40% 354 we had hypothesised prior to the trial[19]. This was slightly higher but in the range of the 355 pooled estimate of 39.3% (27.2-52.9%) among sex workers from low and middle income in 356 studies found in a recent meta-analysis and systematic review[8]. Some 67.7% of those FSW 357 who were aware of their status and reported they were positive also reported taking ART 358 (range 53.4-84.1%). This was similar to our findings in three sites in 2011, when we found 51-359 74% HIV positive FSWs who were aware of their HIV status were also engaged with care[14]. 360 However, coverage is well below the target set by UNAIDS (90% of people with HIV are aware 361 of their infection, 90% of people diagnosed with HIV are on ART and 90% of those on ART 362 adhere and have undetectable levels of HIV in their blood) [30]. Coverage among the general 363 population of adult women in Zimbabwe is not known. 364 Overall 77.8% of those reporting taking ART had a viral load <1000 copies/ml, as did 15.8% of 365 HIV positive women who did not report being on ART. That such a large proportion of women 366 not on ART had a suppressed viral load was not anticipated; one explanation is that women 367 under-reported their knowledge of HIV status and ART usage. However, there have been other 368 surveys with similar findings: the 2012 Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey found that 30% of 369 individuals who reported not being on ART were virally suppressed [32] and among men who 370 have sex with men in the United States reporting to be unaware of their status and therefore 371 not on ART in 2004-2011, 2/11 to 3/7 were found to be virally suppressed [33]. We plan to 372 investigate this further. 373 These data point to an urgent need to improve HIV prevention and care for female sex workers 374 in Africa using comprehensive community-based sex worker led interventions [10]. There is 375 good evidence of their cost effectiveness [34, 35] but in few countries has comprehensive care 376 as recommended by WHO [11] been taken to scale. Interventions that work across the cascade 377 are likely to be more scalable and cost-effective than those that work on only one aspect of 378 the cascade [36]. 379 Conclusions 380 In conclusion, our findings have contributed to knowledge of the HIV care cascade among sex 381 workers in southern Africa. They confirm the urgent need for HIV prevention and care services 382 in this population that address each step of the care cascade. We hope that the SAPPH-Ire trial 383 will contribute to our understanding of how best to serve the needs of female sex workers in 384 the region.

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490 Figure legend

**Figure 1:** The y-axis indicates the proportion of women at each step of the cascade of all women testing HIV positive, while the figures on each bar indicate the proportion of women from each preceding step. Bars indicate the mean RDS weighted values across sites, while the coloured points are individual site values. The shaded portion of the virally suppressed bar represents those women who had a suppressed viral load, but who did not report taking ART.

# **Tables**

**Table 1:** Baseline range and means of cluster-level summaries of socio-demographic characteristics of 2722 female sex workers from 14 clusters

Characteristics of FSW	Frequency	Unweighted	RDS weighted
	N	%	Mean % across sites, (min-max)
Age at interview			
18-24 years	656	24.1	26.5 (9.9 - 38.4)
25-29 years	668	24.5	23.6 (17.8 - 33.1)
30-39 years	956	35.1	34.4 (22.7 - 45.1)
>40 years	442	16.2	15.5 (6.5 - 22.3)
Total	2,722		
Highest level of education that you have completed			
None/primary			
Form 1-3	857	31.7	36.2 (17.5 - 54.9)
Form 4+	966	35.7	35.3 (18.1 - 46.4)
Total	882	32.6	28.5 (18.4- 40.8)
	2,705		
Marital status			
Married	22	0.8	**
Divorced/separated	1,710	62.8	61.9 (46.4 - 70.6)
Widowed	493	18.1	19.4 (9.5 - 39.2)
Never married	497	18.3	18.7 (6.8 - 39.3)
Total	2,722		
Age when first exchanged sex for gifts or money (ie when first started sex work)			
<18 years			
18-19 years	492	18.1	17.4 (8.5 - 25.9)
	173	6.4	6.2 (1.7 - 19.4)
20-24 years	839	30.8	29.9 (19.0 - 40.2)
25/29 years	033	30.0	23.3 (13.0 - 40.2)
>30 years	650	23.9	25.6 (15.1 - 32.4)
Total	568	20.9	20.8 (8.9 - 26.5)
	2,722		
Number of clients had sex with in previous week			

None	200	7.4	8.2 (3.1 - 13.6)
1-5	1,352	49.7	49.9 (33.4 - 70.3)
6-10	578	21.2	21.8 (.9.8 - 36.7)
11-15	218	8.0	6.9 (3.2 – 9.7)
>16	374	13.7	13.2 (3.5 - 31.3)
Total	2,722		
Insecure food quantity*	•		
No	1,513	55.6	-
Yes	1,209	44.4	45.0 (27.0 - 74.5)
Total	2,722		
Worked as a sex worker at anywhere other than current			
location in the last 12 months			
No			
	1,987	73.0	-
Yes			
Tatal	734	27.0	26.7 (17.6 - 38.4)
Total	2 721		
How long lived at the site	2,721		
0-1 years	274	10.1	13.4 (0. 1- 30.4)
2-5 years	855	31.5	34.4 (15.7- 52.7)
>6 years	1,582	58.4	52.2 (33.7 - 80.1)
Total	2,711		
Answered 'very good' or 'good' in response to "In general	·		
how would you describe your relationship with other sex workers in [SITE}?"			
No			
Yes	1,050	38.6	-
Total	4 672	C4 4	C1 4 (F0 0 . 77 0)
	1,672	61.4	61.4 (50.0 - 77.0)
	2,722		
Ever had a sexual partner (including a current or former			
husband, boyfriend but NOT a client) that has hit, slapped, kicked, pushed, shoved or otherwise physically			
hurt			
No			
Yes			
	4.540	F.C. 0	
Total	1,542	56.8	-
	1,172	43.2	40.3 (14.9 - 65.5)

	2,714		
Ever had a client that has hit, slapped, kicked, pushed, shoved or otherwise physically hurt			
No			
Yes	1,897	69.7	-
Total	825	30.3	27.7 (11.0 - 53.4)
In the past year has any member of the police been sexually violent against you?	2,722		
No			
Yes	2569	94.4	
Total	152	5.6	4.6 (0 – 9.0)
In the past year has any member of the police been physically violent against you?	2721		
No	2 420	20.2	
Yes	2,430	89.3	0.7/4.0.40.5)
Total	290	10.7	9.7 (1.8 - 19.5)
Consistent condom use with clients**	2,720		
No	589	21.6	-
Yes	2,133	78.4	76.7 (61.6 – 88.5)
Total Ever Tested for HIV	2,722		
No No	213	7.8	-
Yes	2509	92.2	91.1 (82.5 – 96.9)
Total	2722		(
Tested for HIV within the last 6 months and not HIV positive			
No	331	29.5	
Yes	792	70.5	70 5 /52 7 99 9)
Total	1123	70.5	70.5 (52.7 – 88.8)
HIV status	1123		
Negative	1109	41.0	-
Positive	1599	59.0	57.5 (42.8-79.2)
Total	2708		

HIV viral load <1000 copies/ml among all FSW

No	825	30.5	-
Yes	1883	69.5	70.7 (57.7-81.6)
Total	2708		

<sup>\*</sup>Answering 'no' to 'We can eat at least 2 meals a day', or 'yes' to 'Sometimes we go to bed hungry' or 'yes' to 'In the last week, have you had to go an entire day without eating because there was no food in your household?'.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Reports using condom at last sex and answering no to "Think again about all you clients in the last month, have there been any times when you did not use condoms?"



