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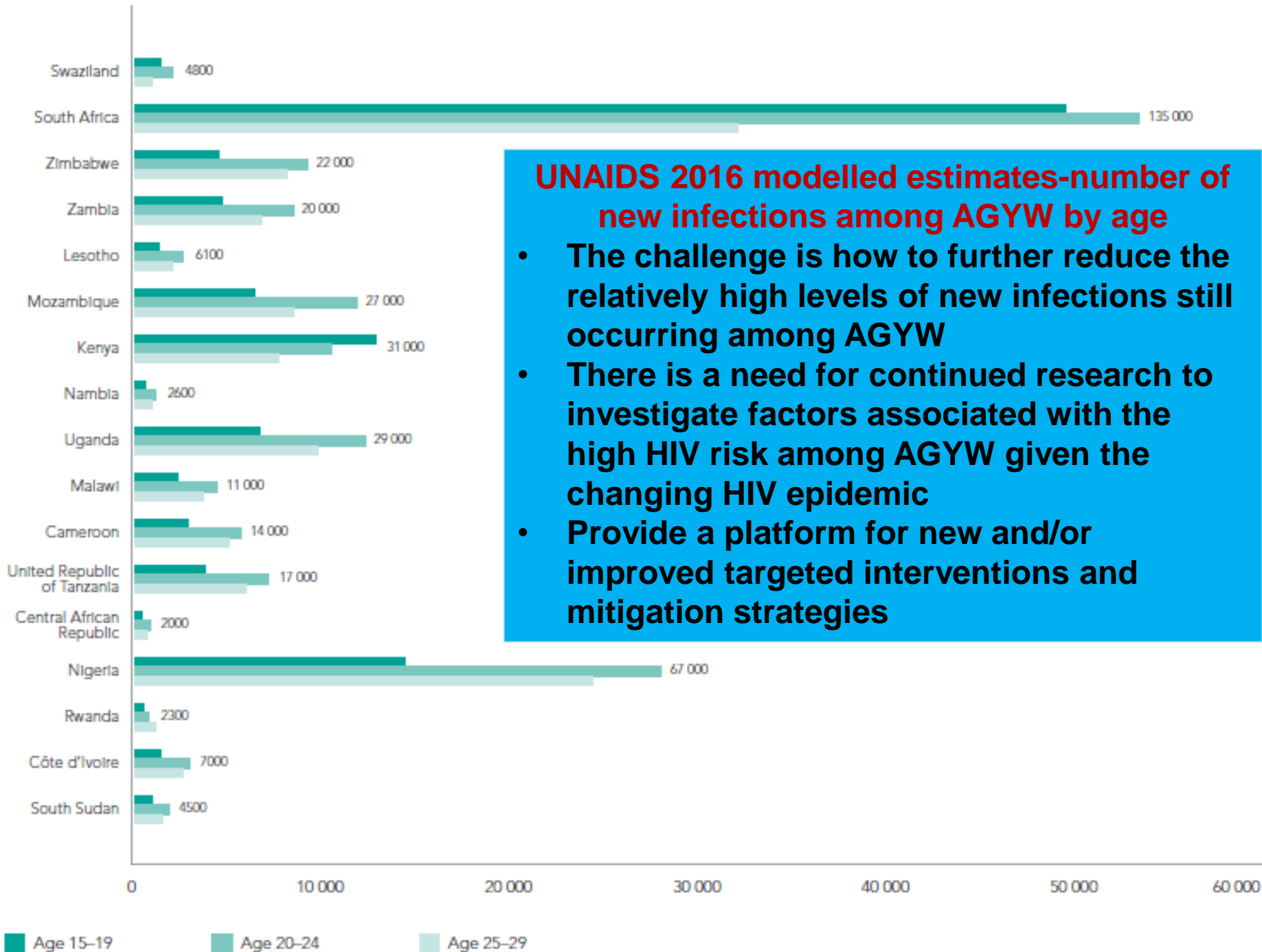
Human Sciences
Research Council

Determinants of HIV infection among adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 years in South Africa

Dr Musa Mabaso

Epidemiology and Strategic Information Unit, HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB (HAST), Human Sciences Research Council(HSRC), Durban, South Africa

- **Several strides have been made in the fight against HIV in SA including nationwide:**
 - **Scaling up of HIV testing and counselling (HCT)**
 - **Rolling out of Antiretroviral (ARV) treatment**
 - **Increasing mass media, social and behavioural change communication campaigns against HIV**
- **Despite progress against HIV/AIDS, AGYW remain at great risk of new HIV infections**
 - **Great strides in reducing infections including among AGYW**
 - **The infections are less than half the levels that were at the peak of the epidemic 10 years ago**
- **Achievements turned the tide against HIV but not enough to stem the tide**



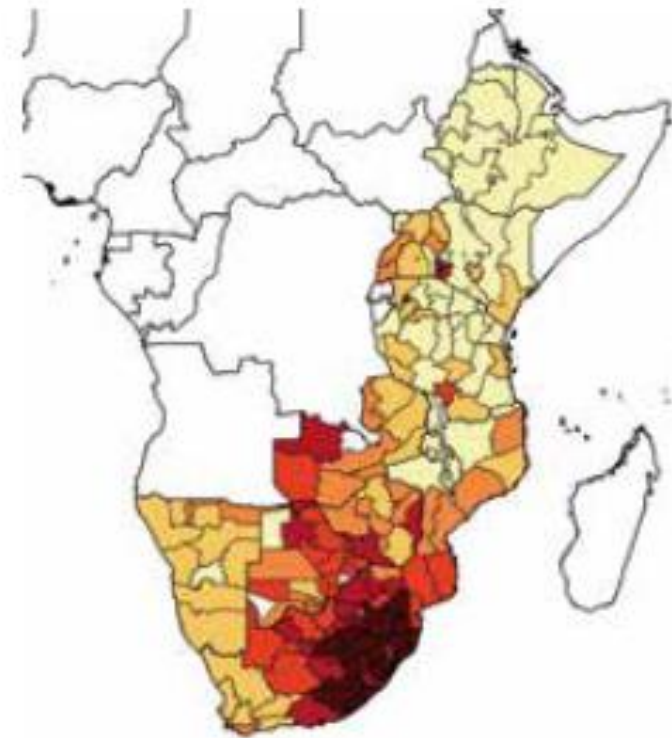
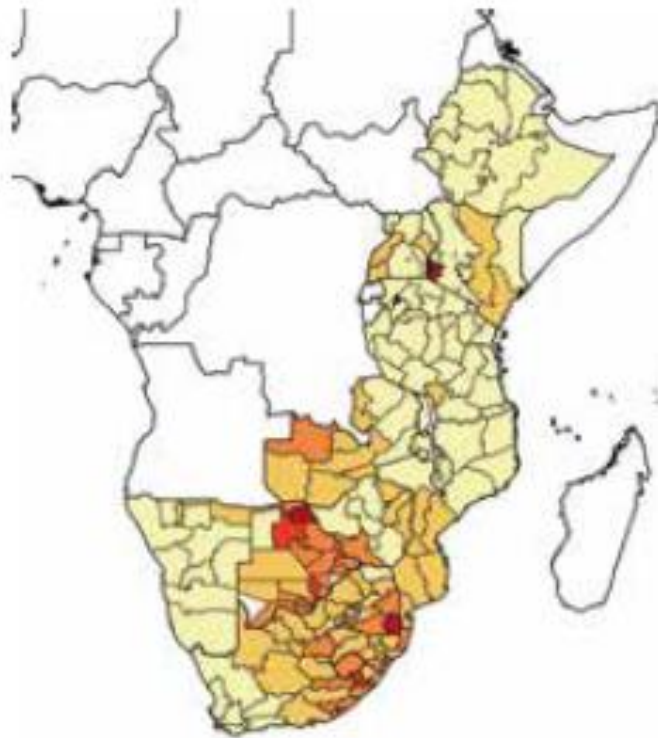
UNAIDS 2016 modelled estimates-number of new infections among AGYW by age

- The challenge is how to further reduce the relatively high levels of new infections still occurring among AGYW
- There is a need for continued research to investigate factors associated with the high HIV risk among AGYW given the changing HIV epidemic
- Provide a platform for new and/or improved targeted interventions and mitigation strategies

Incidence (per cent) among AGYW

15-19

20-24



Subnational HIV incidence (%)



What drives vulnerability of AGYW to HIV?

- Biological factors which make women more susceptible to HIV
 - Immature cervix, a greater proportion of genital mucosa, high levels of genital inflammation and vaginal micro-biome
- Several socio-behavioural factors affect young women's vulnerability to HIV
 - Early sexual debut, multiple sexual partnerships, limited condom use, intimate partner violence, intergenerational and transactional sex
 - Low levels of risk perception and knowledge of HIV status
- **Social and gender norms supportive of male superiority and sexual entitlement**
 - **Leading to gender inequality and unequal power dynamics causing females to be unable to negotiate safe sex**

Study objectives

This analysis investigates socio-demographic and behavioural determinants of HIV infection among AGYW aged 15-24 years in South Africa

Data

- This analysis is based on the 2012 South African HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey
 - A nationally representative population-based household survey
- Used detailed age appropriate questionnaires
 - To collect information related to demographics, HIV-related attitudes, practice, behaviours and knowledge
- Dried blood spots (DBS) specimens were also collected for HIV testing

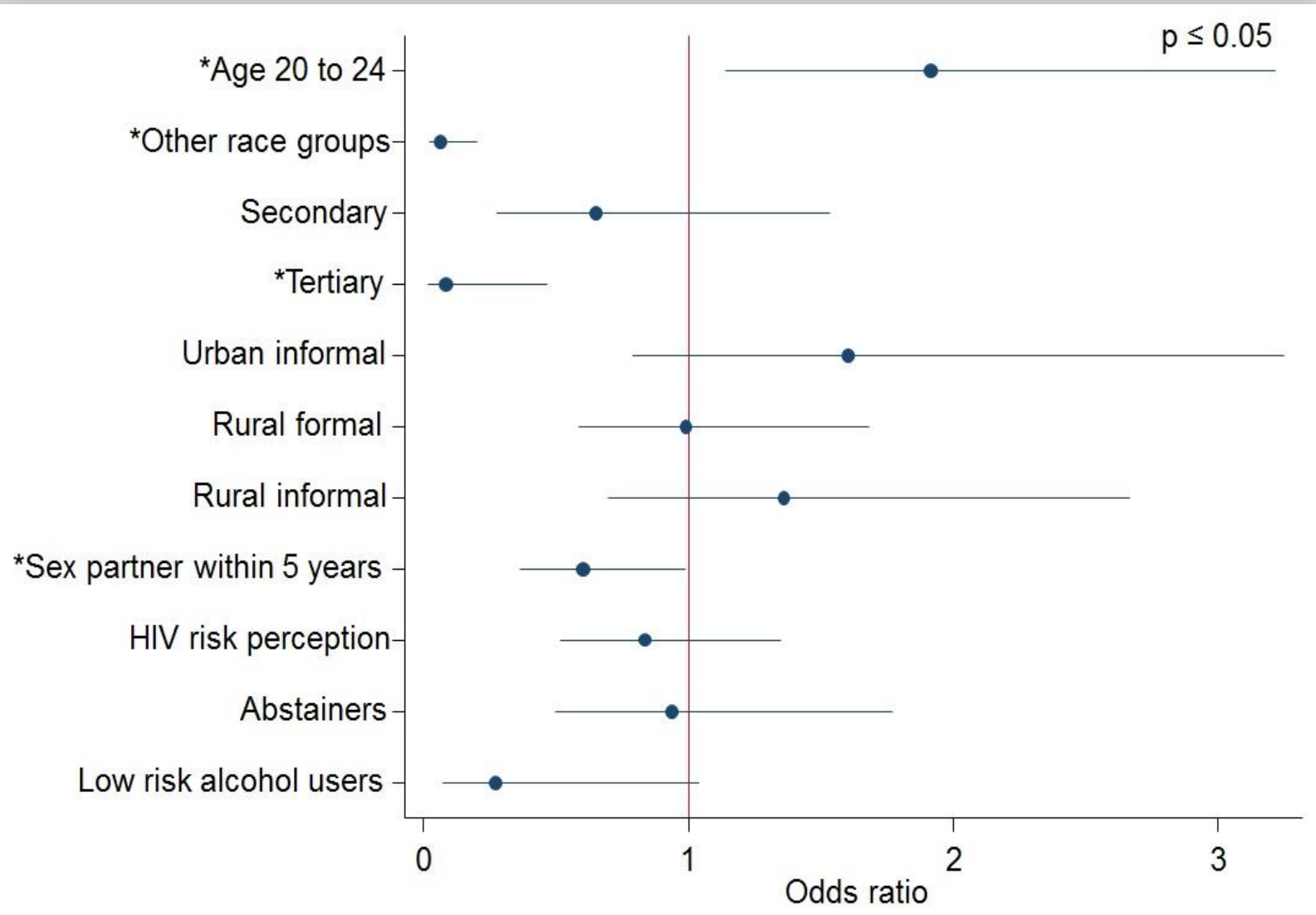
Measures

- The primary outcome:
 - HIV status (HIV negative=0 and HIV positive=1)
- Explanatory variables:
- Socio-demographic variables
 - Age, race, marital status, education level, employment status, and locality type
- Risk behaviours:
 - Age at sexual debut, age-disparate partnerships, multiple sexual partners in the last 12 months, consistent condom use during sexual contact and alcohol use
- Self perceived HIV risk

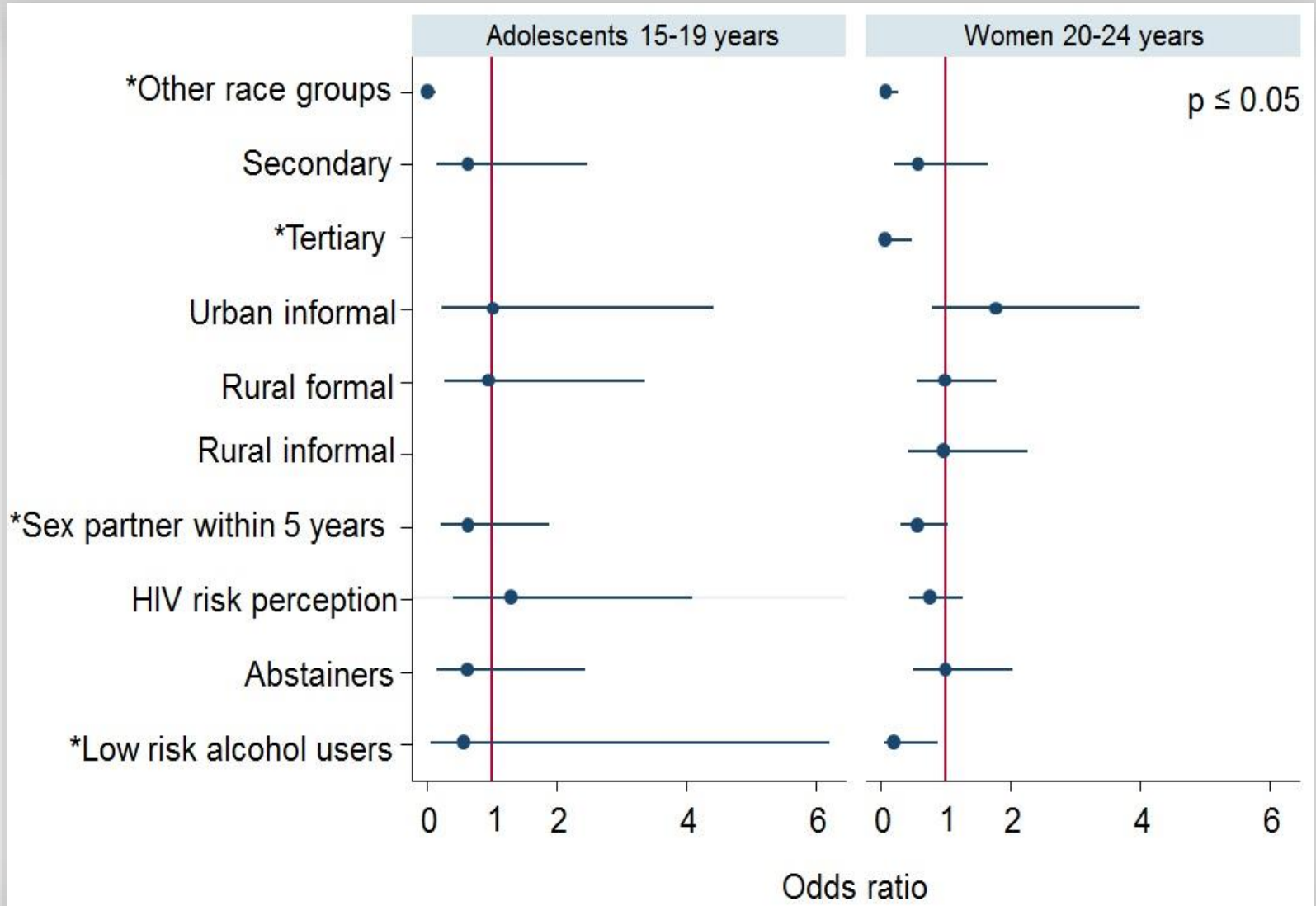
Data analysis

- Bivariate logistic regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between HIV status and selected explanatory variables
- Variables that showed a significant association with HIV prevalence were entered into a multivariate logistic regression analysis
- Only the results of the final model are presented

Findings: Multivariate logistic regression model



Findings: Multivariate logistic regression model



- **Education has a protective effect against HIV**
- **Evidence shows that educated women or those with higher level of education are better equipped or empowered to**
 - Adopt safe sexual practices
 - Change their sexual behaviour
- **Having a sexual partner within the same age range was protective of HIV infection**
- **Age differentials reinforce gendered power dynamics impacting on the ability of women to**
 - Decide on the type of sex
 - Engage in protective sex
- **Low risk drinking had a protective effect**
- **Studies have shown that risky drinking is associated with unsafe sex**
 - Affect the ability to use condoms
 - Can lead to sex with multiple partners

- There is a need to promote education as well as equity and access to schooling for young women
- Intensify efforts targeting risk behaviours such as age disparate relationships and risky alcohol consumption
- Address predisposing factors in order to reduce vulnerability of young women
 - Gender power dynamics that leads to gender inequality
- Women's HIV risk is linked to men's risky sexual behaviour
 - Related to masculine norms and promiscuity amongst men
 - Engaging men and boys vital

- **PEPFAR DREAMS:** a program designed to keep young women **Determined, Resilient, Educated, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe**
 - **Reducing risky sexual behaviours of male sexual partners**
 - **Characterize male sexual partners of AGYW**
 - **Testing of male partners**
 - **If HIV-positive linking to treatment**
 - **If HIV-negative linking to VMMC services**
 - **Changing community and societal norms- community mobilization**
 - **Strengthen families through parent/caregiver programs, cash transfers, educational subsidies, and financial literacy**
- **Global Fund:** Comprehensive risk reduction package of services
 - **Life skills-based HIV education in and out of schools**
 - **Holistic sexual reproductive health services that include HIV, TB and STIs**
 - **Economic empowerment opportunities through incentivised interventions-bridge to employment**

Co-authors

Sokhela Z, Mohlabane N, Chibi B,
Prof K Zuma K, Prof L Simbayi

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THANK YOU