

Knowledge of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis and antiretrovirals preventive potential among migrant women in French Guiana

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BACKGROUND



The use of antiretroviral drugs for prevention is a major progress in HIV prevention.

French Guiana, a French overseas territory in Amazonia, combines

- active immigration (1/3 of the population),
- precariousness (50% below the poverty line)
- and the highest HIV prevalence in France (1.2%).

We aimed to better understand the sexual health and knowledge of migrant women in French Guiana on the preventive potential of ARVs.

METHODS

The cross sectional GuyaSSeReMig study was conducted with a random sample of women attending the two main French Red Cross Prevention and Health Centers in French Guiana (Cayenne and Saint Laurent du Maroni).

The majority of first-time migrants come to these centres for a yellow fever vaccination update.

Multilingual trained health facilitators conducted the interviews. The descriptive statistics and multivariate stepwise logistic regression were performed using Stata 15.0.

RESULTS

- **429 women** recruited
- Median age **30 years** old, IQR [27-37]
- Country of origin:
 - **71.9% were from Haiti**
 - **11,0% from France,**
 - **8,0% Surinam,**
 - and **5.4% from Dominican Republic**
- 66% in a relationship
- Median number of children: 1, IQR [0-3]

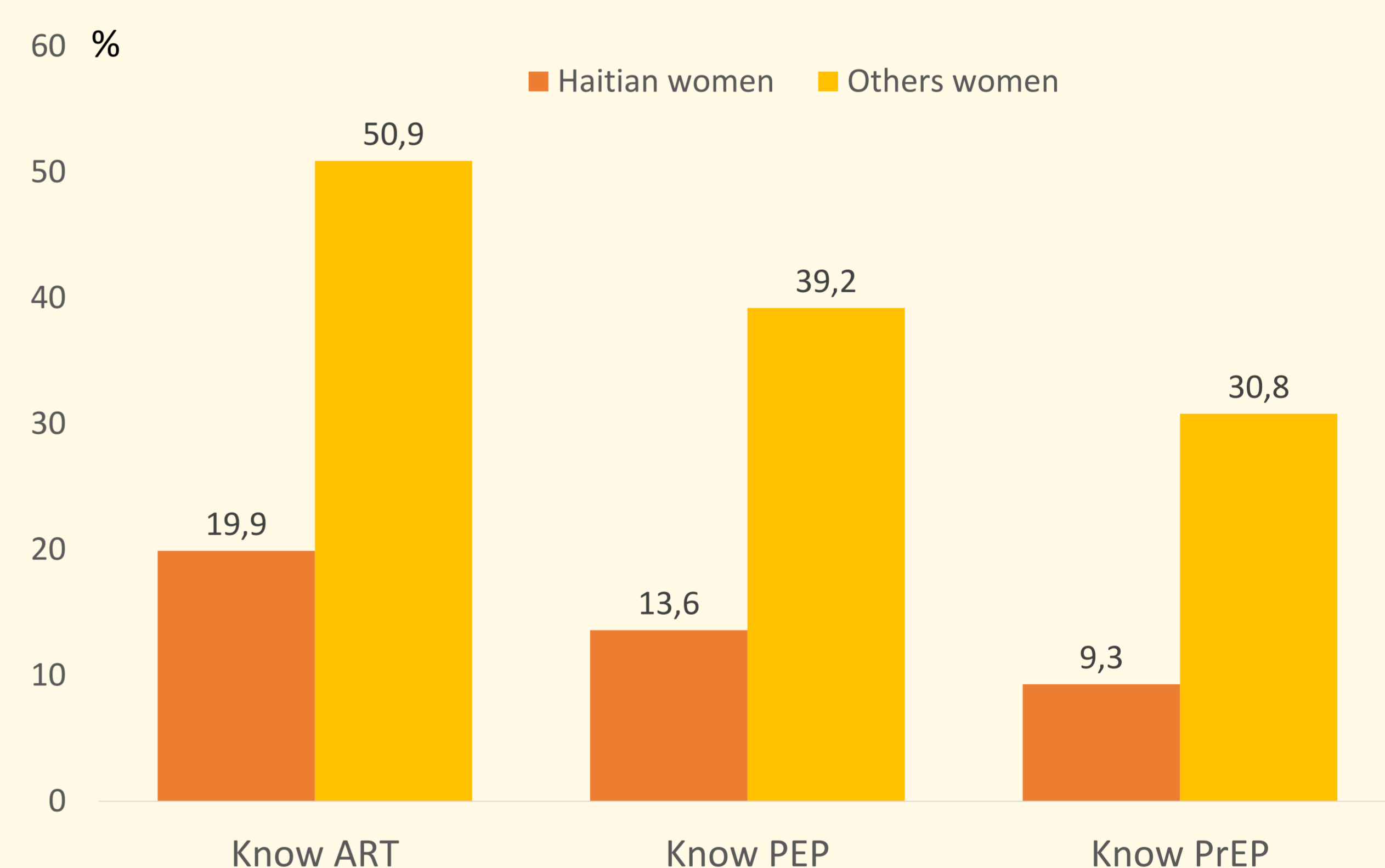
Table 1: Characteristics and social vulnerability according to origin

	All	Migrant	Non migrant	p
Population profile				
Age: Median (IQR)		31 (24-37)	21.5 (20-28)	
No child (N=402), %	37.6	36.0	50.0	0.07
Regular couple/marital relationship (N=403), %	67.9	65.7	84.1	0.01
Illegal administrative status (N=403), %	64.8	72.4	2.3	<0.01
Education attainment (N= 402), %				
Elementary school or lower	23.4	26.3	0	
Junior high school	29.1	30.4	18.2	<0.01
College or higher	47.5	43.3	81.2	
Low/very low level of French language (N=403), %	35.2	39.5	0	<0.01
No health insurance coverage (N=403), %	47.6	52.9	4.5	<0.01
Renounced to health care (N=403); %	34.5	38.7	0	<0.01
Regular income (N=403), %	13.4	8.9	50	<0.01
Moderate or severe hunger* (N=381), %	64.3	67.9	31.6	<0.01
Ongoing pregnancy (N=403), %	4.0	4.2	2.3 (1)	0.46



- Only **28.7%** had ever heard of antiretroviral therapies, less often women from Haiti (19.9% vs 50.9%, p<0.001).
- Only **20.9%** had ever heard of an emergency treatment that allows them to avoid catching HIV after unprotected sex (Post Exposure Treatment - PEP -), 13.6% among Haitian's women vs 39.2% among others (p<0.001).
- Only **15.4%** knew what **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis** for HIV - PrEP - was. Again, Haitian women had a lower level of information (9.3% vs 30.8%, p<0.001).
- Although few in number (n=22), the level of knowledge was significantly higher among women from the **Dominican Republic**, who were **sex workers** at 63.6%.
- Women (n=37) who **self-identified as being at high risk for STIs** were more aware of PrEP (52.8% vs. 11.9%, p<0.001).

Figure 1: Knowledge of HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, post exposure prophylaxis and antiretrovirals preventive potential of among women in French Guiana



In the **multivariate analysis**, knowledge of PrEP

- was associated with
 - **sex work**
 - and **high perceived risk of STIs,**
- and was **negatively associated with**
 - **Haitian origin**

CONCLUSION

The level of knowledge about the preventive effects of HIV antiretroviral therapies and PrEP is extremely low among migrant women in French Guiana. Haitian women are largely unaware of biomedical prevention tools despite reported sexual health needs and deserves targeted interventions.

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