B3.4: Reduced Vaginal Douching Following an Educational Intervention: Preliminary Results

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Abstract:

Introduction: Over the last two decades a growing body of evidence has documented adverse consequences of vaginal douching on women’s reproductive health. Douching increases the risk of bacterial vaginosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, HIV acquisition, and cervical cancer. Despite these risks, douching remains common among women in the United States. The most recent National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) indicated that douching has increased among women of reproductive age. The objective of this study was to evaluate a model-based, educational intervention to reduce vaginal douching among female dyads.

Method(s): The study was a randomized, controlled trial of 278 primarily black female dyads aged 14 to 65 years. Females who reported douching at least once in the past month were recruited from sites around Baltimore City, Maryland. Each participant was asked to invite a friend or relative who she considered a role model to participate in the intervention with her. Participant dyads were then randomly assigned to receive a 3 session douching education intervention or a three session career education control program. The primary outcome was douching cessation. Secondary outcomes included douching knowledge and intention to reduce or stop douching. Outcome measures were collected at baseline, 3 and 6 months.

Results: Seventy-seven percent completed the 3 month follow-up and 56% completed the 6 month follow-up. Sociodemographic characteristics were similar across both groups (e.g. 80% African American, mean age 34). Women in the intervention group were significantly more likely than women in the control group to have reduced or eliminated douching, to have increased their understanding of the risks of douching, and changed their intention to douche.
Discussion & Conclusions: A three session educational intervention can reduce douching among women.

Abstract History:

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