"I Have Doubts"
Perspectives on Food Safety in Peri-Urban Tanzania among Adults Affected by HIV

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Diet, Environment, and Choices of Positive Living: DECIDE STUDY

GOAL

- Characterize the drivers of food choice, food environment, and dietary adequacy among families affected by HIV and living in urban/peri-urban Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
Personal and external food environment influences on diets among PLHIV and families in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Turner Framework (2019)
**Foodborne Illness**

- Growing public health concern
- Sub-Saharan Africa
  - Largest per capita burden
    - 91 million acute illnesses
    - ~137,000 deaths
- People living with HIV (PLHIV) are especially susceptible
- Perceptions of food safety
Qualitative Interviewing

- 40 interviews, July 2019 – March 2020
  - Conducted in Swahili, transcribed and translated
  - Several findings emerged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>PLHIV (n=20)</th>
<th>Caregivers (n=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender, # female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age, years</td>
<td>38 (30.8, 45.8)</td>
<td>39.5 (28.3, 44.8)</td>
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</table>
Findings
~60% discussed their food safety concerns

“I never have doubts, truly I am not worried, I see everything is safe”
- 39-year-old female caregiver
Collating food safety information

- Media
- Experiential
- Observational
Finding 1: Media

- “Plastic rice”
- Processed juice & maggots
Fresh-squeezed Juice: Media & Own Observations

- Newspaper article, 2015

- One PLHIV said that they avoided buying juices because:
  “... do not make it in hygienic environment.”
  - female caregiver, age 40

Finding 2: Media & Health Promotion

- Male participant said:
  “...to a washroom without washing your hands with soap and then you touch food.”
Finding 3: Perceptions about food vendors

“...I buy vegetables from two women only...I don’t just buy vegetables to any vendor, no!"
Finding 3: Perceptions about food vendors

“Normally I buy meat from a specific butcher. Its environment is clean, it is made with glass (window), and they cut meat with a machine.”

Visuals
Finding 3: Perceptions about food vendors
Improved Chickens

- Worries centered on how these improved chickens are raised
  - Antibiotics
  - Growth rate
  - Coops
Finding 3: Agricultural Chemicals

- Multiple participants discussed worrying about the pesticide residues on leafy greens and tubers.
Finding 4: Production Conditions

- Location
- Exposures

A young man, age 27, said, “I have doubts [about] vegetables because...I see how they are cultivated.”
Finding 5: Protective Strategies

- Home
  - Eat in
  - Wash foods
- Purchasing
  - Vendor loyalty
  - Hygiene
Summary: Food Safety as a Driver of Food Choice

- In the context of little regulation and few objective indicators, participants relied on pieces of information to make food purchasing and eating decisions.
- Three areas: agricultural chemical, production conditions, and human contamination.
Summary: Food Safety as a Driver of Food Choice

- Source of protection include:
  - Trust, built from experiences and vendor loyalty that grows with time
  - Direct observations: growing conditions and appearance of sanitation
    - Vendors employ practices that imply cleanliness (aprons, modern equipment, displays)
Next Steps

- Methodologically, however, we did not reach saturation on the topic of food safety.
- Highlights need for additional research to expand on this work
  - Role of social media in the sharing of accurate and inaccurate information
  - Gendered perspectives on food safety as men and women have differential access to social media
  - Identify if/how these data can begin to inform the development of tools to capture perceptions of food safety at multiple levels
Thank you & Acknowledgements

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Collaborators on the DECIDE study Team

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