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## Managing the HIV/AIDS risks in subsaharan African couples. The roles of polygamy and co-residency

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# Managing the HIV/AIDS risks in subsaharan African couples.

## The roles of polygamy and co-residency.

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ECOLE NATIONALE SUPERIEURE DE STATISTIQUE  
ET D'ECONOMIE APPLIQUEE



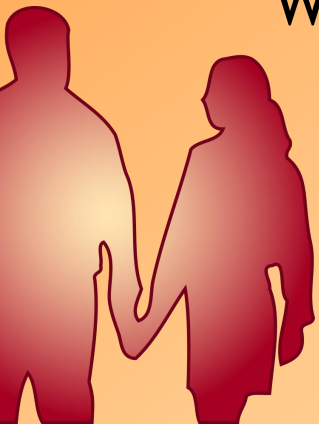
# Context

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- ✘ In subsaharan Africa, HIV prevention remains largely insufficient
- ✘ The prevention mainly depends on the relationship existing between man and woman within the couple
- ✘ In Africa, conjugal union can take multiple forms
- ✘ We explore here two characteristics of the union :
  - ✘ To have a co-wife or not
  - ✘ To live with the partner or not

Which are related to :

- ✘ The communication on HIV within the couple
- ✘ HIV preventive practices used by the couple



# Hypothesis

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## × Hyp 1 :

when a woman shares her partner with a co-wife

⇔ the male domination is stronger

⇔ there is competition between co-wives

→ Dialogue with the partner is more difficult

→ Women less keen to suggest HIV test or the use of condom to their partner

→ not in favour of the adoption of HIV preventive practices



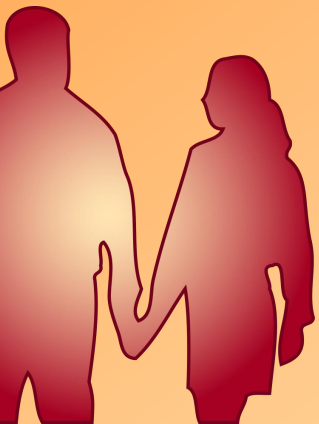
# Hypothesis 2

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## ✘ Hyp 2 :

- ✘ Over the last decades new forms of polygamy have appeared in Africa. These are non official and characterised by non co-residency of the partners.
- ✘ This can be related to a greater autonomy for women

**→ in favour of the  
adoption of HIV preventive practices**



# Objective : to explore the links

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Co-residency  
of the partners

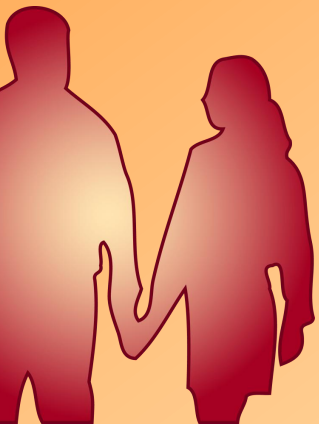
Polygamy  
(existence of a co-wife)



Gender  
relationships

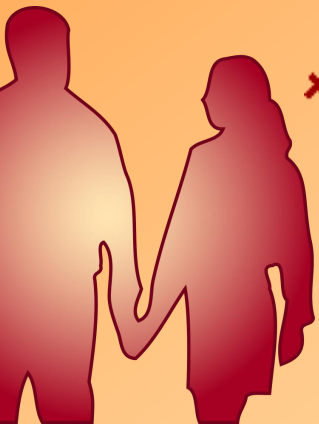


HIV prevention



# The present research :

- ✘ Social science part of a Prevention of the Mother-to-Child HIV transmission programme
- ✘ 322 HIV+ women and 353 HIV- women HIV tested during a pregnancy and followed 18 months after delivery
- ✘ Indicators of **risk management** :
  - ✘ Indicators of communication about HIV within the couple
  - ✘ Indicators of HIV preventive practices
- ✘ Variables :
  - ✘ **About couple characteristics** : polygamy, partners co-residency, partners age difference, woman HIV status
  - ✘ **For adjustment** :
    - ✘ for both partners : age, level of education
    - ✘ for women only : religion, remunerated activity, living conditions, age at first sexual intercourse

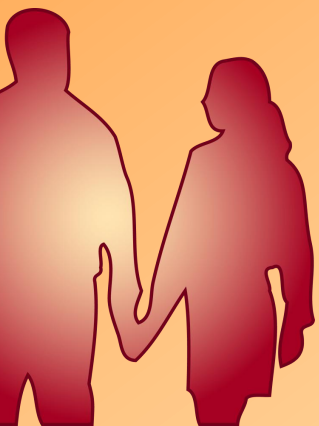
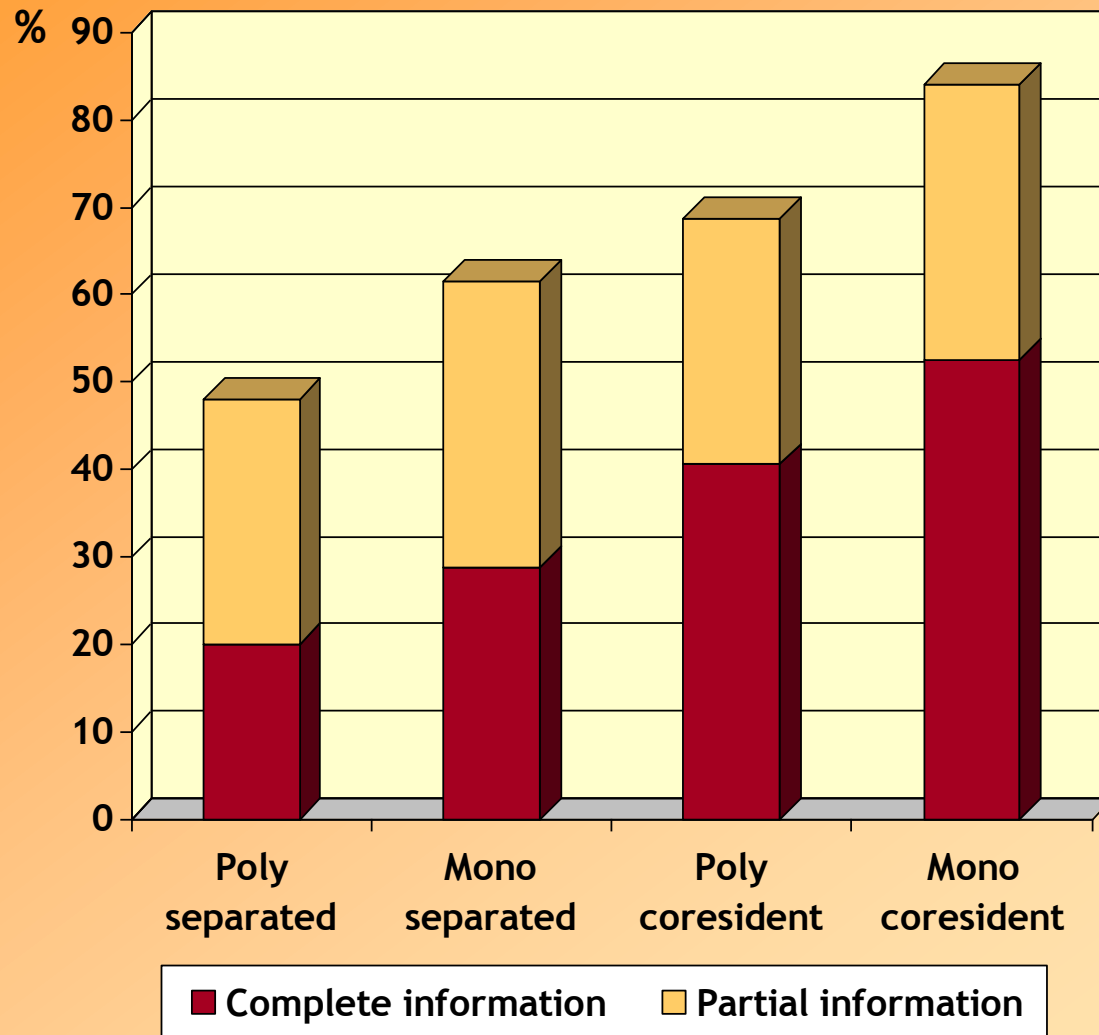


# Communication around STD/HIV within the couple

	BEFORE HIV test	AFTER HIV test		
Dialogue indicator woman/partner	Has discussed STD with partner	Has discussed STD with partner	Has notified partner of her own HIV test	Has suggested for the partner to be HIV tested
HIV- women	65%	96%	98%	91%
HIV+ women	29%	63%	51%	70%

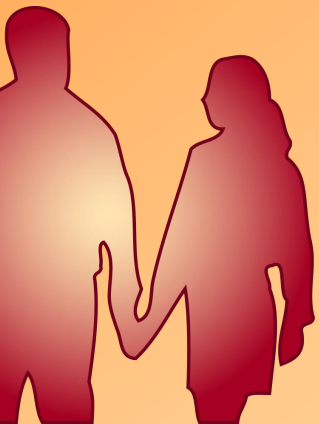


# Communication about STD/HIV between HIV+ women and their partner, after HIV test, by the kind of union

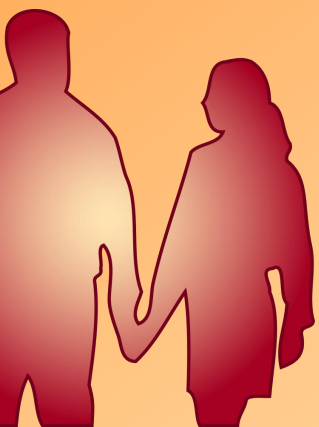
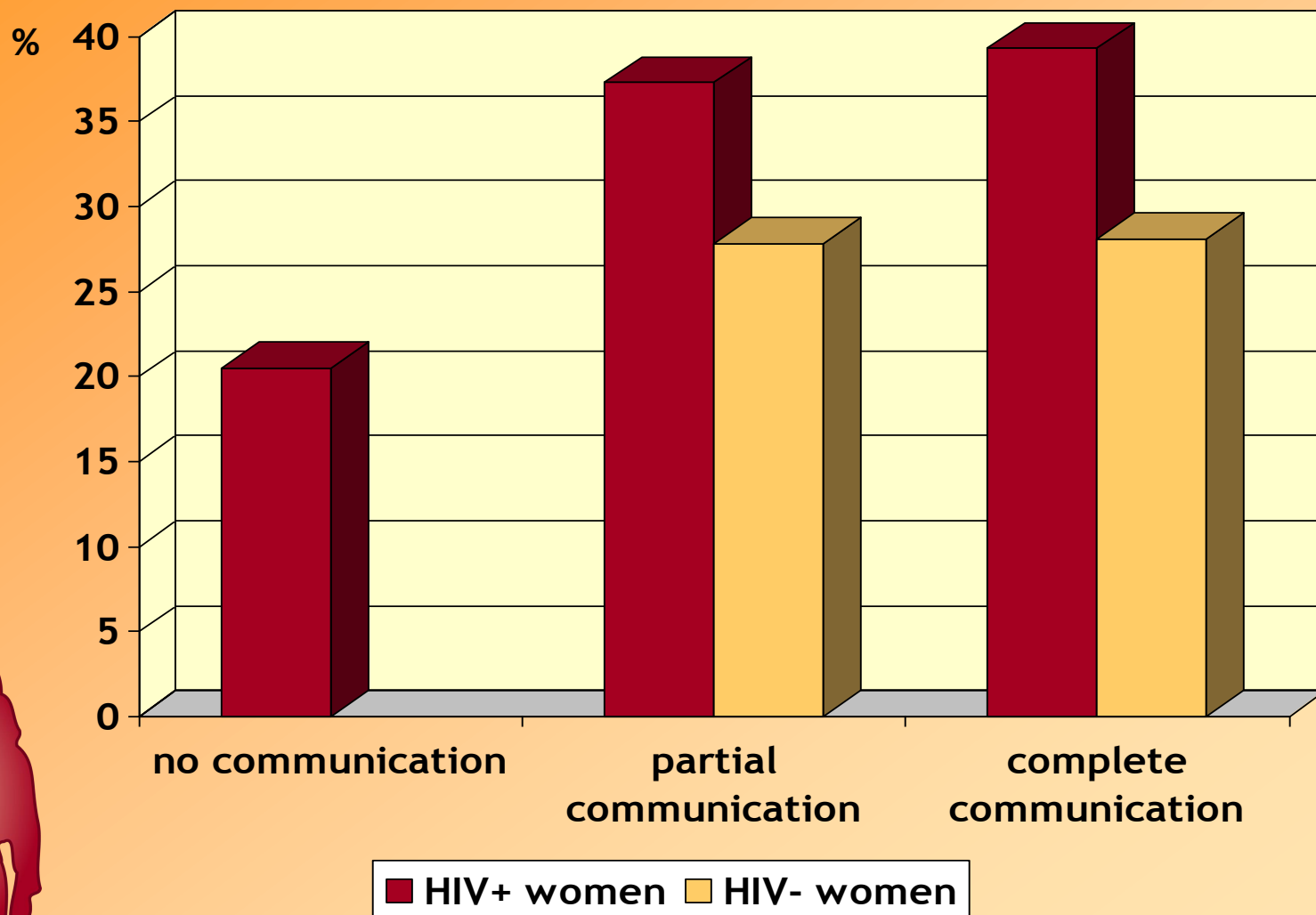


# Conclusions on couple communication on STD/HIV

- ✘ After HIV test, nearly all HIV- women communicate on HIV and/or STD with their partner
- ✘ After HIV test, 2/3 of HIV+ women communicate on HIV/STD with their partner
  - ✘ Sometimes without disclosure of their serostatus : strategy of educated women
  - ✘ Co-residency and monogamy are the sociodemographic characteristics strongest related to a complete communication with the partner about HIV



# % of systematic condom use at sexual resumption after delivery according to the level of communication on STD/HIV within the couple



# Multivariate analysis of the probability of condom use at sexual resumption after delivery

*Significant variables after adjustment :*

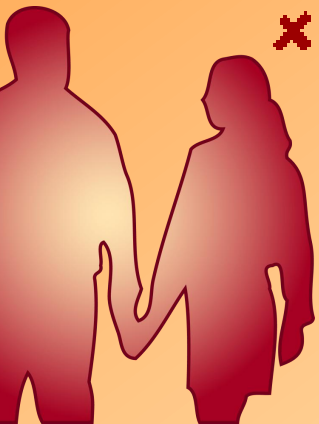
HIV+ women	HIV- women
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✘ Communication within the couple on STD/ HIV</li><li>✘ level of education of the partner</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✘ Level of education of the woman</li></ul>



# Conclusions (1)

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- ✘ Polygamy and non co-residency related to less communication on STD/HIV within the couple
- ✘ Use of HIV preventive practices depends on
  - ✘ Partner notification of the wife's HIV test
  - ✘ Communication on STD/HIV within the couple
  - ✘ Instruction level of the partner on the risk of HIV infection
- ✘ But no direct link between polygamy and co-residency on HIV preventive practices.



# Conclusions (2)

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- ✘ It is necessary to take into account **the specificity of the conjugal bond** in order to improve HIV prevention within the couple
- ➔ consider which indicators are to be collected so to catch this specificity, in addition to classical union indicators :
  - ✘ Existence of a co-wife or an «official mistress »
  - ✘ Partners co-residency
  - ✘ Duration of the union
  - ✘ Expectations of each partners regarding this union
  - ✘ Etc.

