



Increasing Numbers of Young Pregnant Women with HIV Infection in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan District, South Africa

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Background

- South Africa has the most number of people living with HIV.
- Although overall HIV prevalence in South Africa has stabilised, the prevalence is increasing in some geographic areas and amongst certain population groups.
- HIV incidence is more difficult to measure than prevalence; however, trends in prevalence amongst young people aged 15-24 is considered a proxy measure for incidence, as this age group is less affected by mortality and HIV infections are likely to be recent.
- Anecdotal reports of increasing numbers of young HIV-infected pregnant women in areas of the Eastern Cape province have been noted.
- This study investigated trend over time in the age distribution of HIV-positive pregnant women presenting at three antenatal facilities in order to estimate age-specific HIV prevalence trends.



Methods

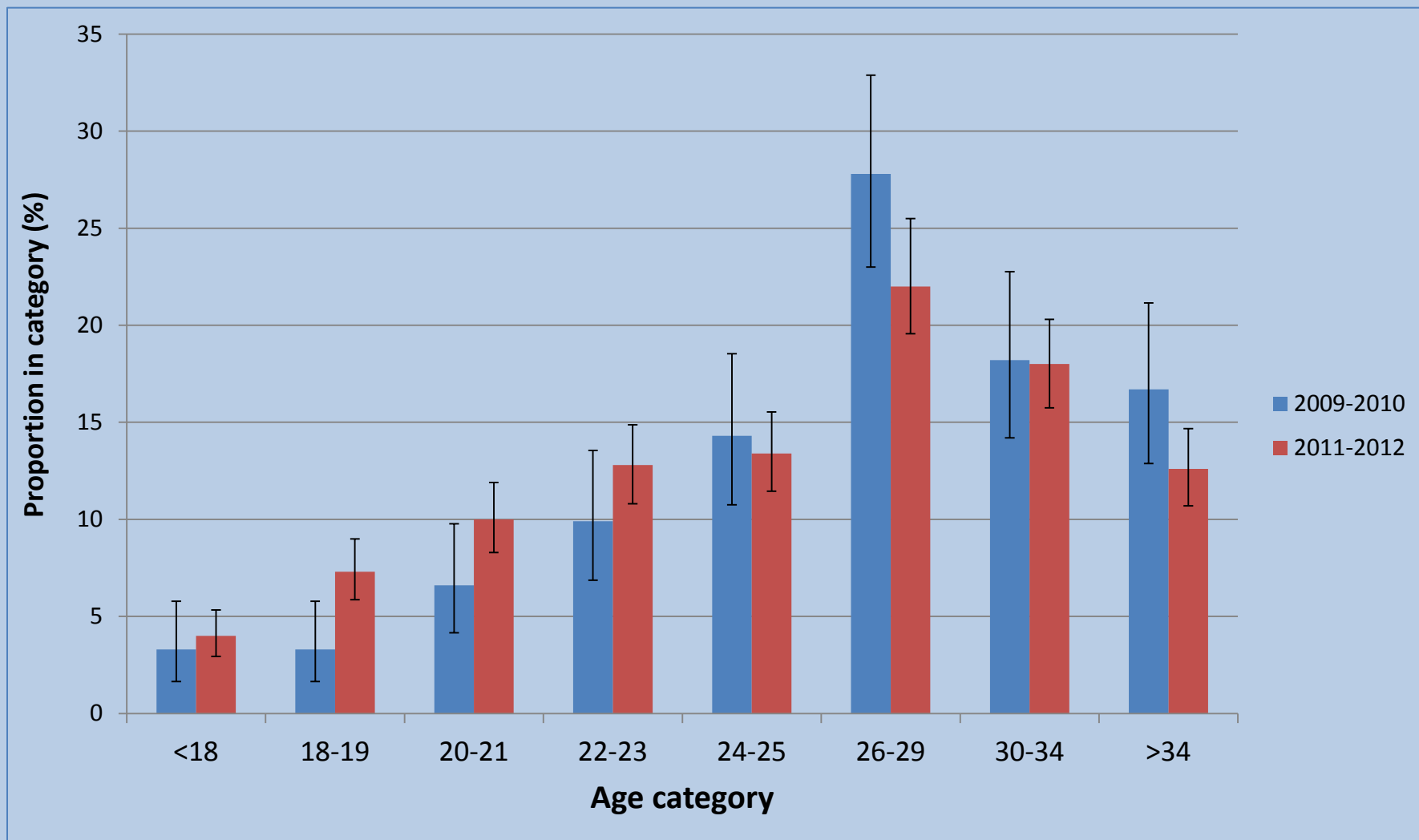
- A cohort study was performed at three sentinel surveillance facilities in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan District (sub-district B).
- All HIV-positive pregnant women presenting at the antenatal facilities (January 2009 - June 2012) were included & followed-up through the post-natal period.
- Routine, individual-level antenatal and postnatal clinical data were collected and recorded electronically.
- The age distribution of all HIV-positive pregnant women according to year of presentation were analysed.
- Trend over time was assessed using the Cochrane-Armitage test.
- Ethical clearance was received from the University of Cape Town Research Ethics Committee.



Results

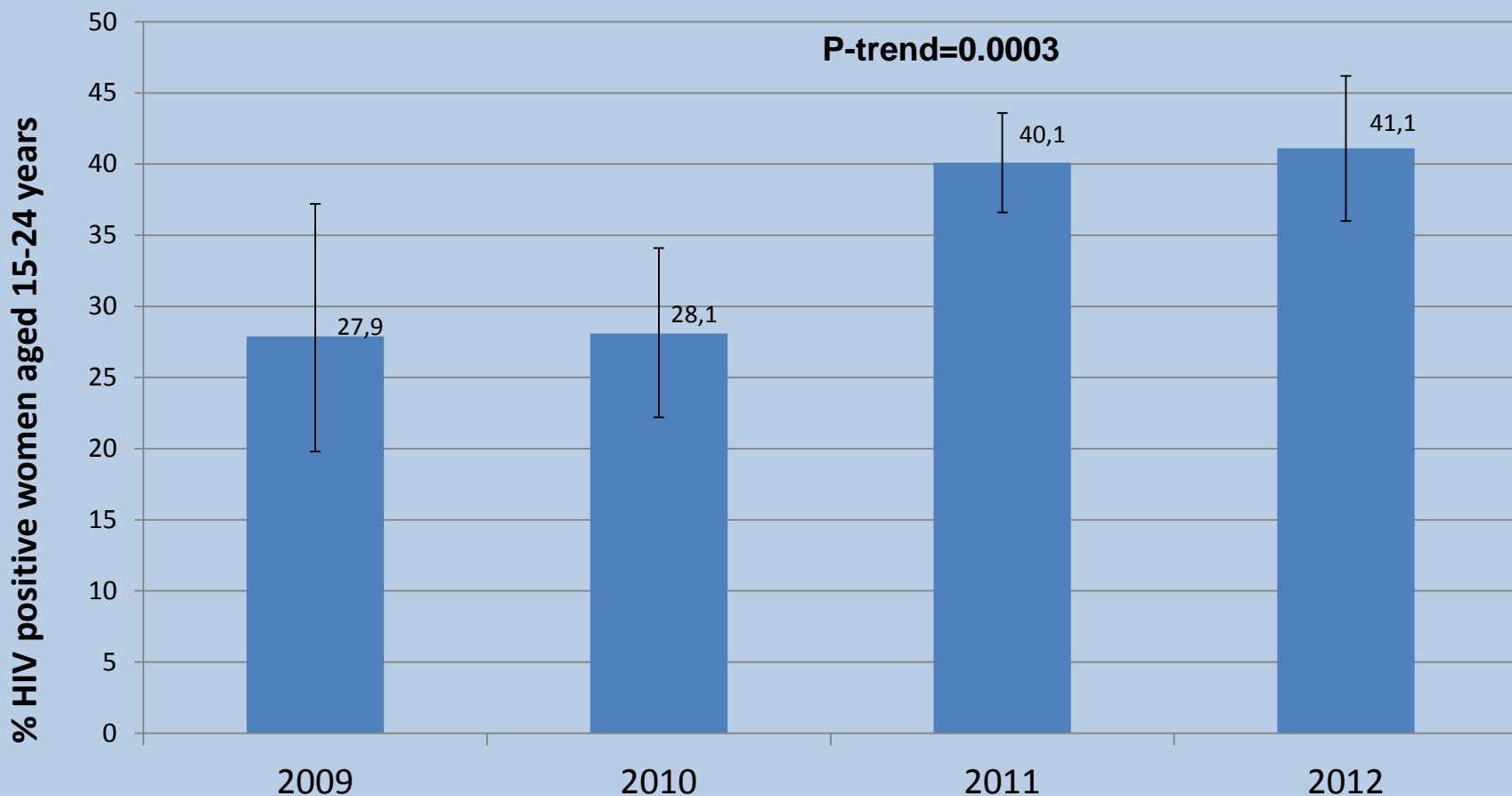
- 1455 pregnant women were included.
- Median age: 26.8 years (IQR: 22.9-36.6 years).
- Median baseline CD4 cell count: 351 cells/ μ L (IQR: 235-509).
- Median gestational age at booking: 21 weeks (IQR: 16-26).
- 65% women were unaware of HIV status at booking.
- 12% women on lifelong ART at booking.
- 7.5%, 15.3%, 51.2% and 26% women presented in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012, respectively.

Age distribution of antenatal HIV positive women for 2009/2010 and 2011/2012





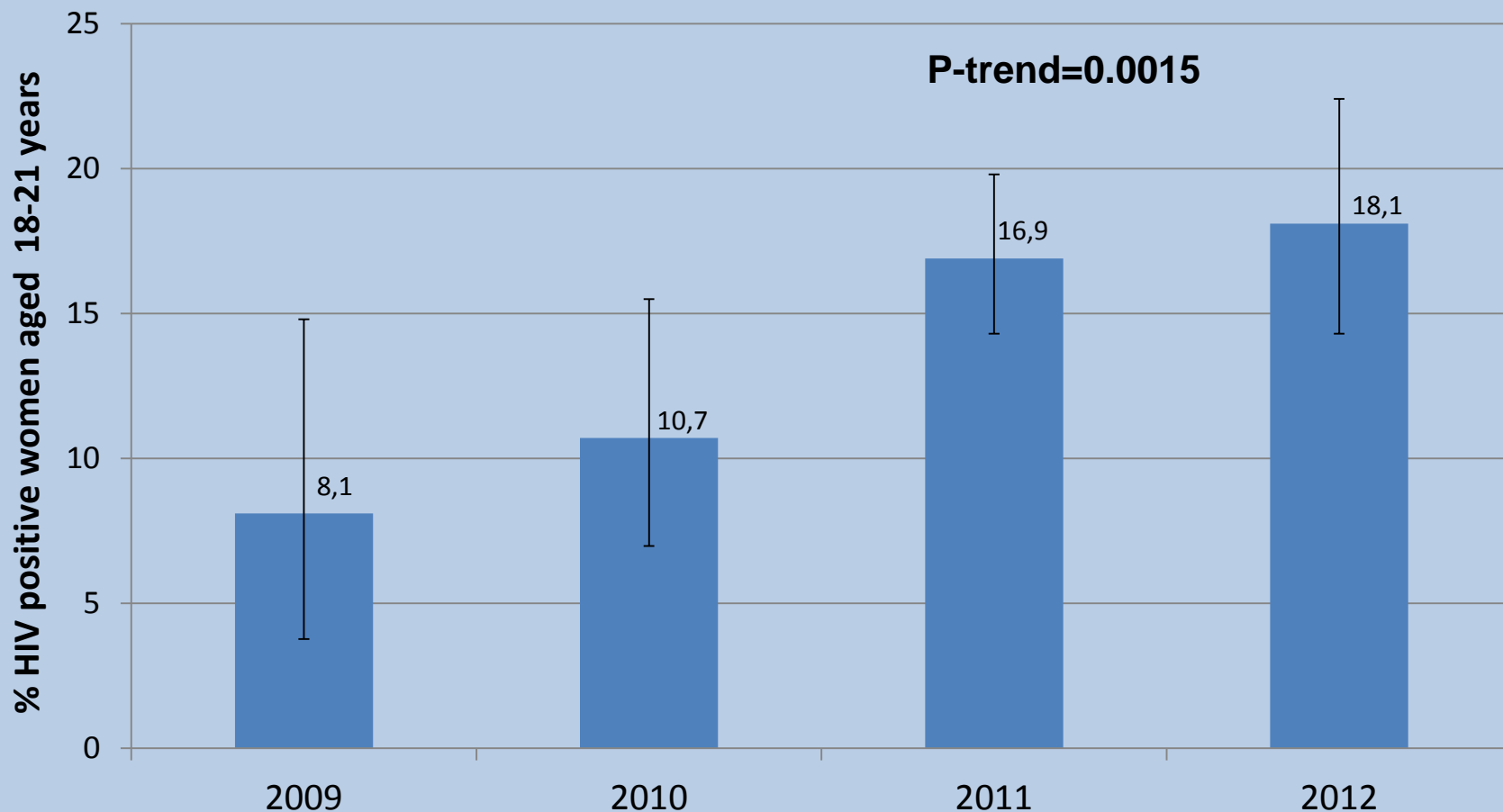
Proportions of HIV+ women aged 15-24 years by year of booking.



Almost 50% increase between 2009-2012, from 27.9% (95% CI: 19.8-37.2) to 41.1% (95% CI: 36.0-46.2).



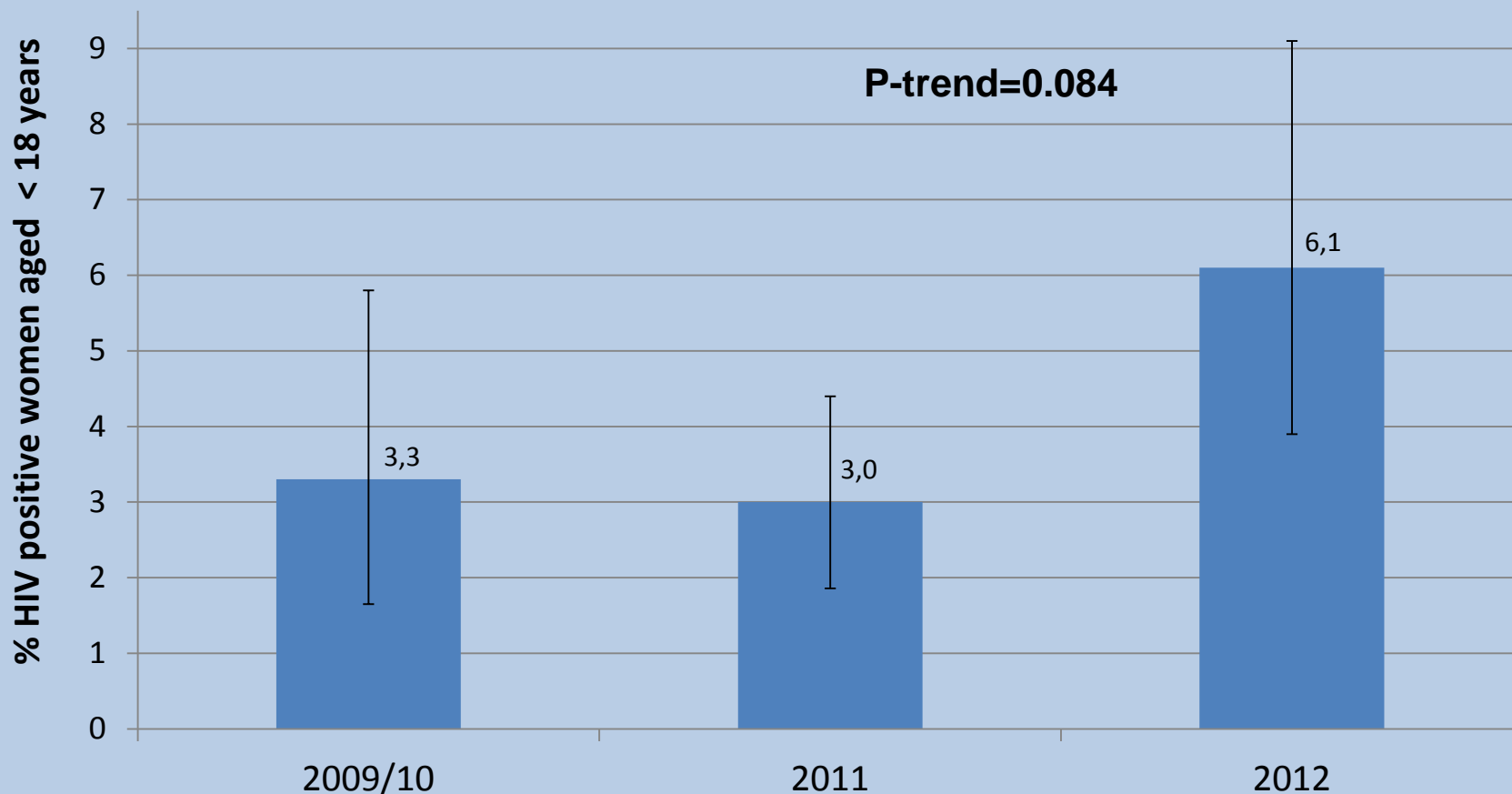
Proportions women aged 18-21 years by year of booking



More than two-fold increase between 2009-2012, from 8.1% (95% CI: 3.8%-14.8%) to 18.1% (95% CI: 14.3%-22.4%).



Proportion adolescents aged <18 years by year of booking.



Almost 70% increase from 3.6% (95% CI: 0.1%-7.1%) to 6.1% (95% CI: 3.7-8.6%)



Age-related associations

Age (years)	<18	18-21	22-24	>24	P-value
HIV status at booking unknown (%)	93	81	69	57	<0.0001
On ART at booking (%)	2	3	5	18	<0.0001
Chooses formula feeding (%)	8	16	31	38	<0.0001
Infant 6 week HIV PCR positive (%) (n=450).	-	4.1	7.1	1.9	0.05



Conclusions

- Increasing proportions of younger women with HIV, who are pregnant, are presenting at facilities in sub-district B of NMBM.
- Although HIV incidence or prevalence cannot be directly measured from this data, these trends suggest increasing HIV incidence amongst younger women, increasing youth pregnancy, or a combination of both.
- Younger women were also less likely to know HIV status or be on ART at booking and had higher vertical HIV transmission rates.
- Factors driving these findings should be investigated, and intensified HIV prevention and family planning efforts should be directed toward youth and younger women in this area.



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