

Addressing the Needs of South Asian American HIV-Positive Women  
in the Robert Wood Johnson AIDS Program (RWJAP)

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## **Background**

RWJAP provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary HIV specialty care in an academic medical school setting. RWJAP has a collaborative partnership on site with its prenatal providers in an effort to ensure the implementation of perinatal HIV guidelines.

To date, 853 patients have been cared for in the program. The current patient population consists of 79 children, 42 adolescents, and 37 women. 6 of the 37 women are of South Asian American descent. The purpose of this abstract is to review an emerging trend in the recent enrollment of South Asian women since 2000.

Enrollment of South Asian women in the history of RWJAP is as follows: one woman in 2000, two in 2002, one in 2003, and two in 2004. HIV is an emerging issue for this population. In the cohort of six women, two did not receive the implementation of perinatal guidelines due to missed opportunities in the prenatal and perinatal arena. The following data represents a review of six patients enrolled in the program.

## **Methods**

A retrospective chart review was conducted on six HIV-positive women of South Asian descent that enrolled in RWJAP from July 2000 – September 2004. Demographic, medical, and social data was collected from the time of enrollment through March 2005.

## **Results**

### *Demographic Information*

All six women were born in India between 1961 and 1979. Median number of years in the United States is 8. Two of the six are US Citizens. Five of the six are professionals.

### *Marriage and Sexual History*

Five of the six are married. Four claim to have one sexual partner. Two have had two sexual partners. Of these two women, one is divorced secondary to domestic violence and the other has been widowed. Six women live with a partner. Two of the six partners are HIV-positive.

### *Mode of Transmission*

HIV mode of transmission was heterosexual through current or previous husbands for four women, and blood exposure that occurred outside the US for two women.

### *Enrollment in RWJAP*

Four women enrolled in RWJAP during pregnancy; two enrolled post-pregnancy. Mode of referral included prenatal care for four women, HIV-exposed infant for one, and self-referral for one.

### *Method of HIV Diagnosis*

Four women were diagnosed during pregnancy; two were diagnosed secondary to immigration processes.

### *Antepartum and Postpartum History*

Four women received IV AZT during pregnancy. Four women delivered NSVD; two received a Cesarean section. Six infants sero-reverted. Five women are on treatment.

### *Special Needs*

Special needs of the cohort include: mental health (2/6) and domestic violence (2/6).

### **Summary**

Over the past five years, RWJAP has seen a rise in the referral of South Asian HIV-positive women and their infants. Two of the women did not receive perinatal HIV treatment as per guidelines. Outreach to South Asian women and prenatal providers is needed to identify the women sooner and provide HIV Prevention Education. The special needs of the women include assistance with disease diagnosis adjustment as well as mental health support. Future research may include addressing social stigma and secrecy within the population.

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