

HIV and parenting needs to be discussed, new study finds

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A team from Royal Holloway University and St. Mary's Hospital, London, interviewed young people aged 18-23 who had transmitted HIV from their mothers – known as 'perinatally acquired HIV' (PAH). Previously most of these children would have died in childhood, but medication in the UK, means they are surviving into early adulthood.

Researchers found that all of the participants wanted to become parents, but they were concerned about having to tell their [children](#) that they were HIV positive in the future and some were worried about transmitting HIV to their child. In particular, the team found that there was major concern about the effect wanting to have children would have or has already had on their relationships, especially the need to tell their partner they were HIV positive.

"It is clear that the worry to tell partners becomes even more acute when the idea of having children is brought up," said lead author Dr Michael Evangelini from the Department of Psychology at Royal Holloway.

"These findings will be particularly relevant in sub-Saharan Africa, as there are two million young people between 10 and 19, most of whom have been living with HIV since birth. For many of these young people, becoming parents is a very important part of their culture. Indeed, many of the African participants in our study mentioned the importance of culture in their decisions about having children."

The team has made a number of recommendations in the study for

[health care professionals.](#)

"It is essential that we come up with strategies to help young people communicate clearly with their partners about parenting and HIV. Now that children born with HIV are surviving to adulthood, parenting is an urgent issue that needs to be discussed for the well-being of [young people](#) with HIV, their partners and children," added Dr Evangelini.

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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