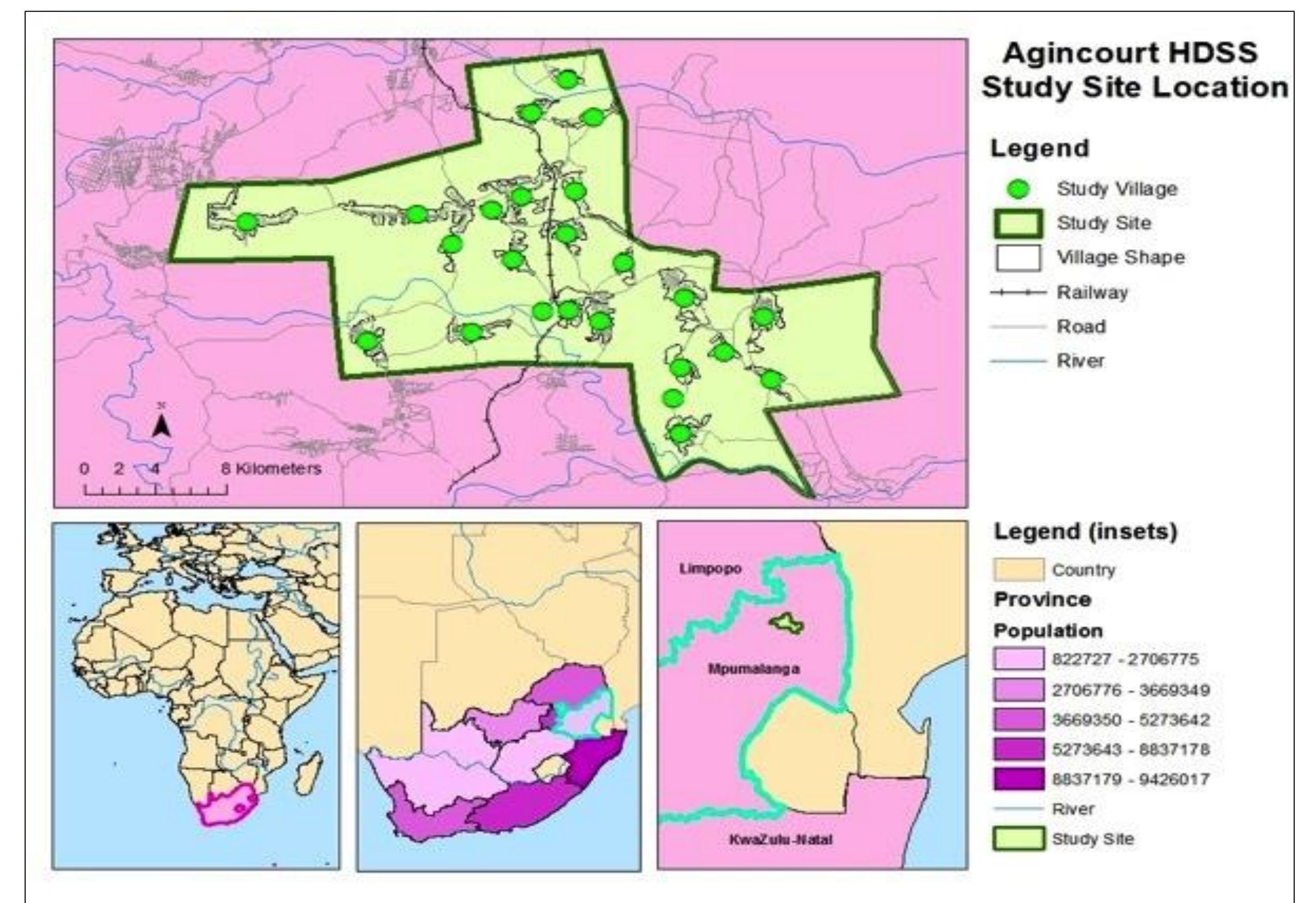


BACKGROUND

- In South Africa, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) account for nearly 80% of all new HIV infections amongst young people and estimates of depression amongst this population range from 20-45%
- AGYW are twice as likely to experience HIV infection and depression as their age-matched male counterparts.
- Little is known about trajectories of depressive symptoms amongst AGYW in South Africa or how trajectories of depressive symptoms overlap with engagement in HIV-related sexual behaviors such as early sexual debut, condomless sex, transactional sex, and age-disparate partnerships.



Adolescent Girls and Young Women Who Experience Depressive Symptoms During Early Adolescence are Potentially More At Risk of Engaging In HIV-Related Sexual Behaviors

METHODS

- Longitudinal data are from the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) 068 study, a conditional cash transfer study of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), age 13-20 in rural South Africa. A total of 2452 HIV- AGYW were followed for up to six years.
- Group-based trajectory modeling was used to identify longitudinal patterns of depressive symptoms. After model fit was assessed, each AGYW was assigned to the trajectory group for which they had the highest posterior probability of group membership and HIV-related sexual behaviors for each group were descriptively compared using chi-square tests.
- Depressive symptoms were measured with the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D-10). HIV-related sexual behaviors included early sexual debut (sex before age 15), condomless sex, transactional sex, and age disparate partnerships (partner > 5 years older).

RESULTS

- Median age at baseline was 16 (IQR 15-17), 28% were sexually active (n=507), and 33% (n=587) reported depressive symptoms
- Three depressive symptoms trajectories were identified: “increasing across adolescence” (n=69, 4%), “decreasing across adolescence” (n=257, 15%), and “no depression across adolescence” (n=1437, 81%).
- Across all visits, the “increasing across adolescence” and “decreasing across adolescence” groups, compared to the “no depression across adolescence” group, were more likely to have early sexual debut, ever engage in condomless sex, transactional sex, and age-disparate partnerships (Table 1).

Table 1. Depressive Symptoms and Sexual Behaviors by Trajectory Class

| | All | Class 1 (Increasing Depression) | | Class 2 (No Depression) | | Class 3 (Decreasing Depression) | | Difference Between Groups | |
|-------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|----|----------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|---------|
| | N | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | |
| Depressive Symptoms | | | | | | | | | |
| CESD Score > 16 at Baseline | 587 | 33% | 29 | 42% | 335 | 23% | 223 | 87% | < 0.001 |
| CESD Score > 16 at Last Visit | 276 | 16% | 67 | 97% | 121 | 8% | 88 | 34% | < 0.001 |
| Sexual Behaviors | | | | | | | | | |
| Early Sexual Debut (< 15) | 409 | 23% | 18 | 26% | 297 | 21% | 94 | 37% | < 0.001 |
| Any Condomless Sex | 754 | 43% | 27 | 39% | 586 | 41% | 141 | 55% | < 0.001 |
| Any Transactional Sex | 482 | 27% | 24 | 35% | 342 | 24% | 116 | 45% | < 0.001 |
| Any Older Partner (> 5 Years) | 664 | 38% | 29 | 42% | 508 | 36% | 127 | 49% | < 0.001 |

CONCLUSION

- AGYW who experience depressive symptoms during adolescence are potentially more at risk of engaging in HIV-related sexual behaviors than AGYW who experience no depressive symptoms, particularly AGYW who experience depressive symptoms earlier in adolescence.

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