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Testing HIV positive doesn’t deter women from getting pregnant

By MALCOLM RITTE

Pregnant inner-city women in New York who learned they were infected with the Aida virus were not deterred from getting pregnant again and giving birth, despite the risk of infecting their babies, a study found. The result suggests that just testing pregnant women for Aida virus infection, as recommended by some health authorities, may not substantially reduce the number of infected babies born, the researchers said.

To reach that goal, women must be provided with adequate birth control, their sexual partners must be involved in efforts to prevent further births, and “women must be helped to find self-fulfillment in areas other than childbearing,” the researchers wrote.

The study also emphasizes the importance of finding ways to prevent mother-to-baby transmission, said co-author Dr Howard Minkoff. ¡t also supports Maintaining access to abortion services, he said.

He and colleagues at the state university of New York Health Science centre in Brooklyn present the study in the June issue of the Journal Onset (rifts and Gynecology.

The finding makes sense, said Vickie Maya, a psychologist at the University of California, Los Angeles, who studies Mda-related behaviour in women and ethnic minorities.

“When you see someone there is 20-to-50 per cent chance of their child being (infected) with the virus, that’s riot horrendous if you think about it,” Maya said. “Given what the meaning of pregnancy could be, you might decide to take that risk.”

A new child may mean more intimacy with a sexual partner or even marriage, or an impetus for leading a better life, she said. In the inner city, a child also may be seen as a chance to raise the family’s status if the baby grow up to be successful, and a source of support for the mother in her inlet years, Mays said.

In addition, many births from infected women in the study probably were not planned, she said. In poorer households, lack of privacy and mismatched working shifts can make it harder to plan sex, and therefore to practice contraception, she said.

Sexual partners may also object to contraceptives like condoms, she said.

The study involved 206 pregnant. Mostly minority women of low socioeconomic status. They were drawn from an area of Brooklyn with a high rate of infection with the aids virus (HIV) Minkoff said. The women, ail enrolled in prenatal care programmes were offered HW testing and counselling.

Testing found that 98 women were HIV.-positive and 108 were uninfected.