

12° CONGRESSO NAZIONALE



Italian Conference on
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*Reach out
for including all*



12-16 ottobre 2020

DIGITAL EDITION

Awareness and perception of accuracy of the Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U) message in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), in Italy and correlation with the level of confidence in reference physicians

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Disclosure

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Background and objective

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- The efficacy of ART on HIV transmission has been widely demonstrated.
- As a consequence, the Prevention Access Campaign has been set up to spread the slogan “Undetectable = Untransmittable” (#UequalsU) with the purpose of raising HIV prevention awareness and reducing HIV stigma.
- At present, a considerable number of studies have demonstrated a low level of awareness of the message among those involved, never more than 15%, with higher percentages in the case of people living with HIV.

Purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceived accuracy of U=U message among PLWHA, HIV-negative people with sexual risky behaviors (PWSRB) and infectious diseases physicians, to guide subsequent efforts and implementation of HIV prevention strategies.

Methods

- Italian nationwide web-survey
- Among ICONA centers, both PLWHA and ID physician were asked to participate.
- People with sexual risky behaviours (PWSRB) referring to community-based voluntary test&counselling centers (CBVTC) and fast-track cities websites were asked to participate.
- Three different anonymous questionnaires (for ID physicians, PLWHA and PWSRB).
- The awareness of U=U ("have you ever heard of") and the perception of accuracy of U=U [Likert scale from 1=completely inaccurate (low) to 4=completely accurate (high) were analyzed.
- Logistic regression models have been fitted to investigate factors associated with the binary outcomes (i) *awareness of U=U* (Y/N) and (ii) *perceived high accuracy of U=U* (Y/N).

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Survey U=U



Conosci U=U?

Con il tuo aiuto potremmo migliorare i messaggi relativi ad HIV, rafforzando la prevenzione e combattendo lo stigma.

Chiediamo 5 minuti del tuo tempo

Vai al sito www.uequalsuicon.it oppure inquadra il QRCode con il tuo smartphone e compila il questionario anonimo.



TI RINGRAZIAMO PER LA COLLABORAZIONE!

#UequalsU

Le risposte sono raccolte in forma **anonima** da Fondazione Icona e utilizzate esclusivamente per le finalità del progetto. Il questionario è rivolto a persone con infezione da HIV, medici infettivologi e alla popolazione generale.

Per ulteriori informazioni:
info@fondazioneicona.org



Results

Main Participants' characteristics (N=1121)

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PLWHA (people living with HIV/AIDS), ID (Infectious Diseases) physicians; PWSRB (people with sexual risky behaviors)

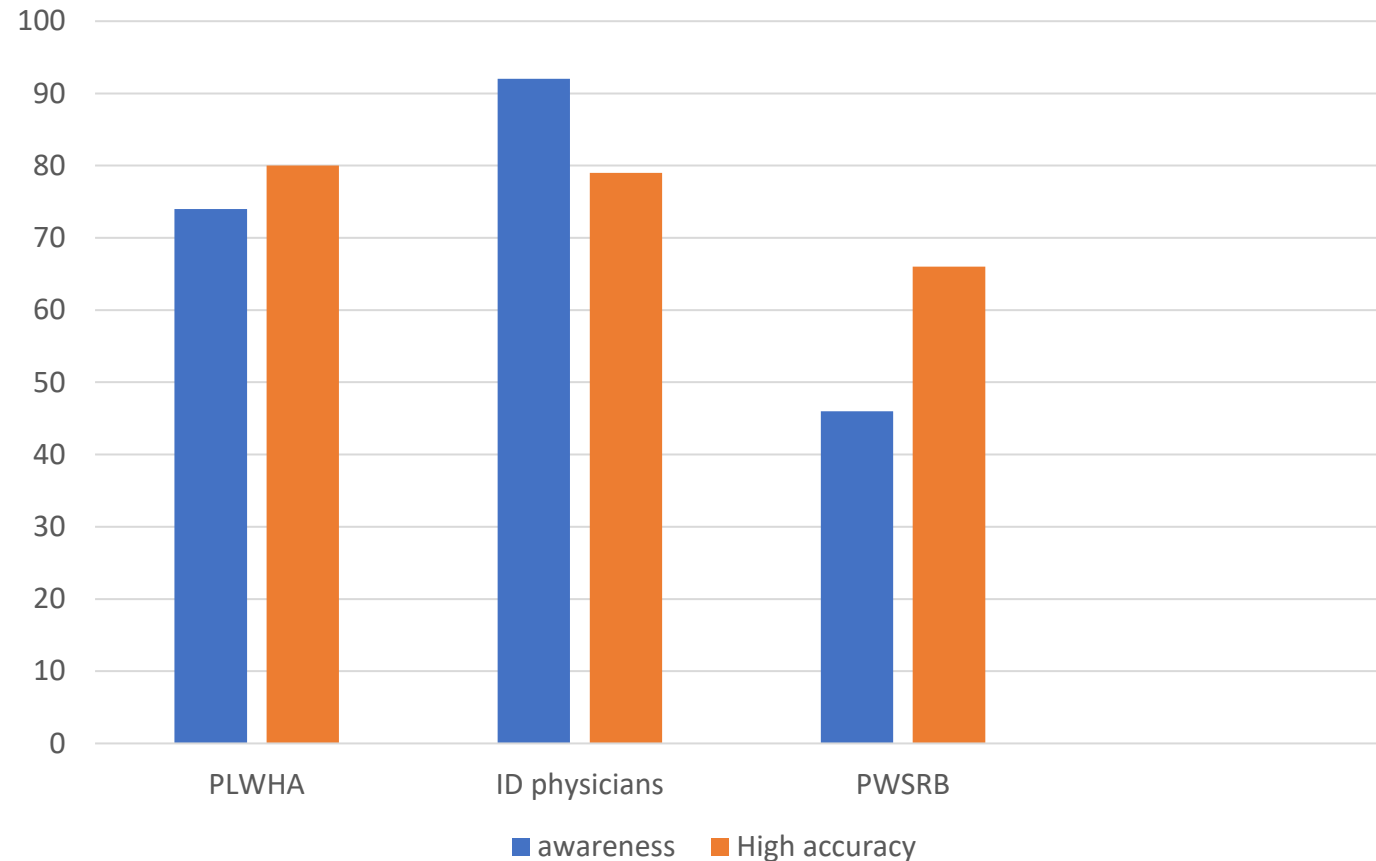
	PLWHA (N=397)
Age, years, n(%)	
<40 years	122 (30.79)
40-50 years	124 (31.2)
>50 years	151 (38.0)
Gender, Male, n(%)	324 (81.6)
Nationality, Italian, n(%)	375 (94.5)
Italian Geographical Zone, n(%)	
Northern	235 (59.2)
Central	117 (29.5)
Southern/Islands	45 (11.3)
Education, University, n(%)	157 (39.6)
Years with HIV infection	
<5 years	112 (28.2)
10-5 years	98 (24.7)
>10 years	187 (47.1)
Years of cART	
<5 years	125 (31.5)
10-5 years	113 (28.5)
>10 years	159 (40.0)
HIV-RNA undetectable, Yes, n(%)	372 (95.6)
N. of sexual partners, median(IQR)	2 (1-10)
Sexual Orientation, n(%)	
Heterosexual	131 (33.0)
Bisexual	41 (10.3)
Homosexual	225 (56.7)
Stable Sexual Partner, n(%)	
Yes, HIV-pos	53 (13.3)
Yes, HIV-neg	154 (38.8)

	ID physicians (N=90)
Age, years, n(%)	
<40 years	49 (54.4)
40-50 years	18 (20.0)
>50 years	23 (25.6)
Gender, Male, n(%)	37 (41.1)
Nationality, Italian, n(%)	.
Italian Geographical Zone, n(%)	
Northern	46 (51.1)
Central	38 (42.2)
Southern/Islands	6 (6.7)
Education, University, n(%)	90 (100.0)
Management of PLWHA, Yes, n(%)	73 (81.1)
Yrs. management of PLWHA, n(%)	
<10 years	39 (53.4)
10-20 years	15 (20.6)
>20 years	19 (26.0)
Number of PLWHA in care, n(%)	
<100	36 (49.3)
100-400	15 (20.6)
>400	22 (30.1)

	PWSRB (N=634)
Age, years, n(%)	
<40 years	461 72.7
40-50 years	110 17.3
>50 years	63 9.9
Gender, Male, n(%)	431 68.0
Nationality, Italian, n(%)	610 96.4
Italian Geographical Zone, n(%)	
Northern	415 (65.7)
Central	115 (18.2)
Southern/Islands	102 (16.1)
Education, University, n(%)	392 (61.8)
Management of PLWHA, Yes, n(%)	
N. of sexual partners, median(IQR)	2 (1-10)
Sexual Orientation, n(%)	
Heterosexual	224 (35.3)
Bisexual	42 (6.6)
Homosexual	368 (58.0)
Stable Sexual Partner, n(%)	
Yes, HIV-pos	40 (6.3)
Yes, HIV-neg	272 (42.9)
Last HIV test, n(%)	
<6 months	242 (38.2)
6-12 months	95 (15.0)
>12 months	176 (27.8)
Never done	121 (19.1)

Awareness vs accuracy of the U=U message

- *Have you ever heard of U=U?* (Awareness)
- *How accurate do you think the condition of U=U is?* (Accuracy)



Physicians perceived that 11% of PLWHA have a high perception of U=U; 34% of PLWHA reported a definitive positive messages received from physicians.

Factors associated with awareness of U=U among PLWHA

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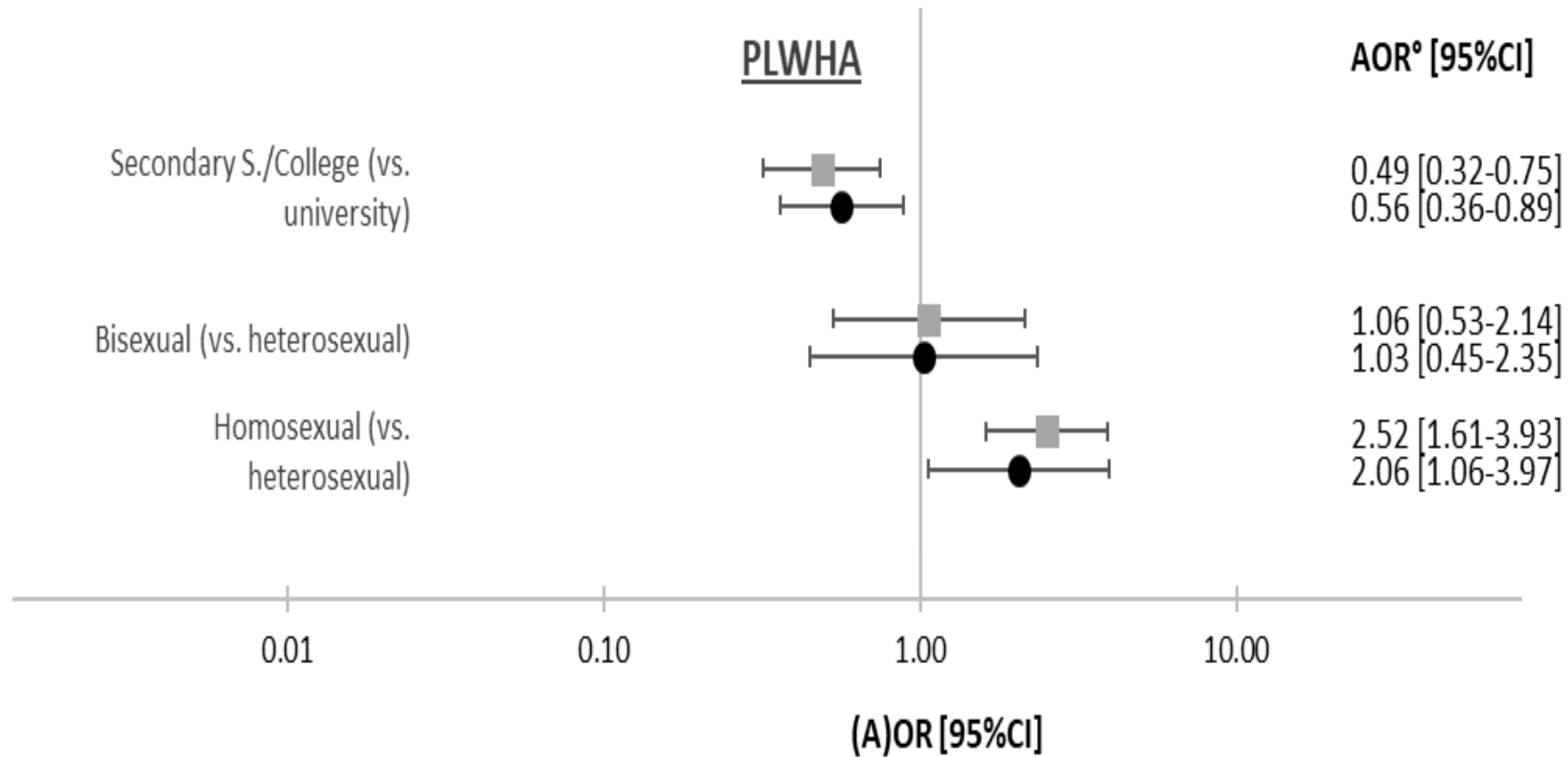
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	OR	p	95%CI	AOR*	p	95CI%
Age, years						
<40	1.00					
40-50	0.51	0.029	0.28 0.93	0.47	0.030	0.24 0.93
>50	0.50	0.019	0.28 0.89	0.78	0.501	0.37 1.62
Education						
Secondary School/College	1.00			1.00		
University	2.26	0.001	1.37 3.73	1.77	0.039	1.03 3.04
Sexual Preferences						
Heterosexual	1.00			1.00		
Bisexual/Homosexual	3.11	<.001	1.95 4.97	3.16	0.001	1.57 6.36
Time form first ART start						
<5 years	1.00			1.00		
5-10 years	2.17	0.021	1.12 4.21	2.71	0.006	1.32 5.55
>10 years	0.72	0.223	0.43 1.22	1.01	0.985	0.53 1.90
Italian Zone						
Central	1.00			1.00		
Northern	1.30	0.305	0.79 2.12	1.19	0.531	0.69 2.04
Southern	1.92	0.138	0.81 4.55	2.99	0.022	1.17 7.61

* Adjusted for age, gender, level of education, sexual preferences, years from ART start, partnership, n partner in the last year, geographical zone

Factors associated with perceiving accuracy of U=U message as 'high' (PLWHA)

Multivariable logistic regression analysis



° Adjusted also for age, gender, sexual preferences, years on cART, stable partnership, n. of partners in the last year, geographical site

Factors associated with perceiving accuracy of U=U message as 'high' (ID physicians)

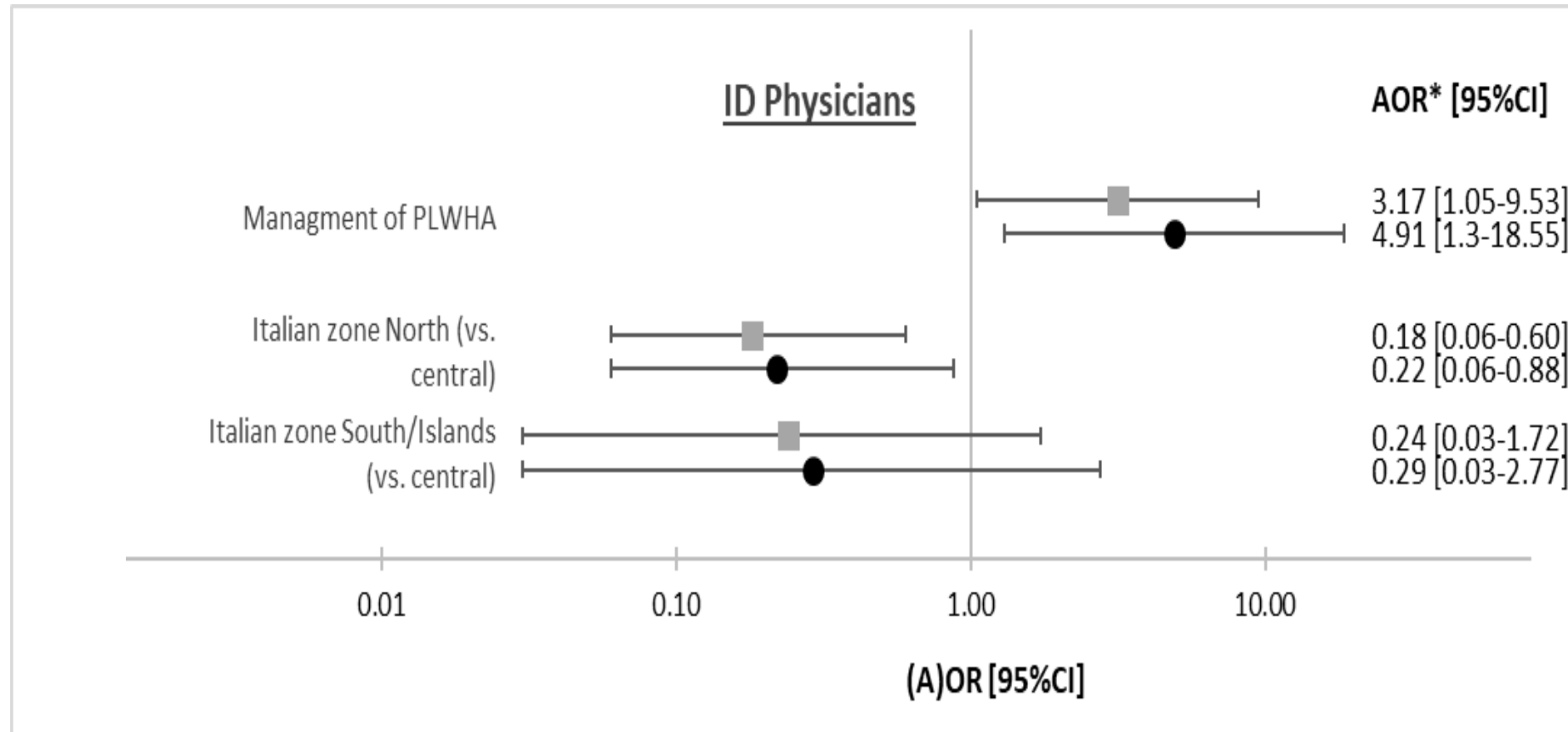
Multivariable logistic regression analysis

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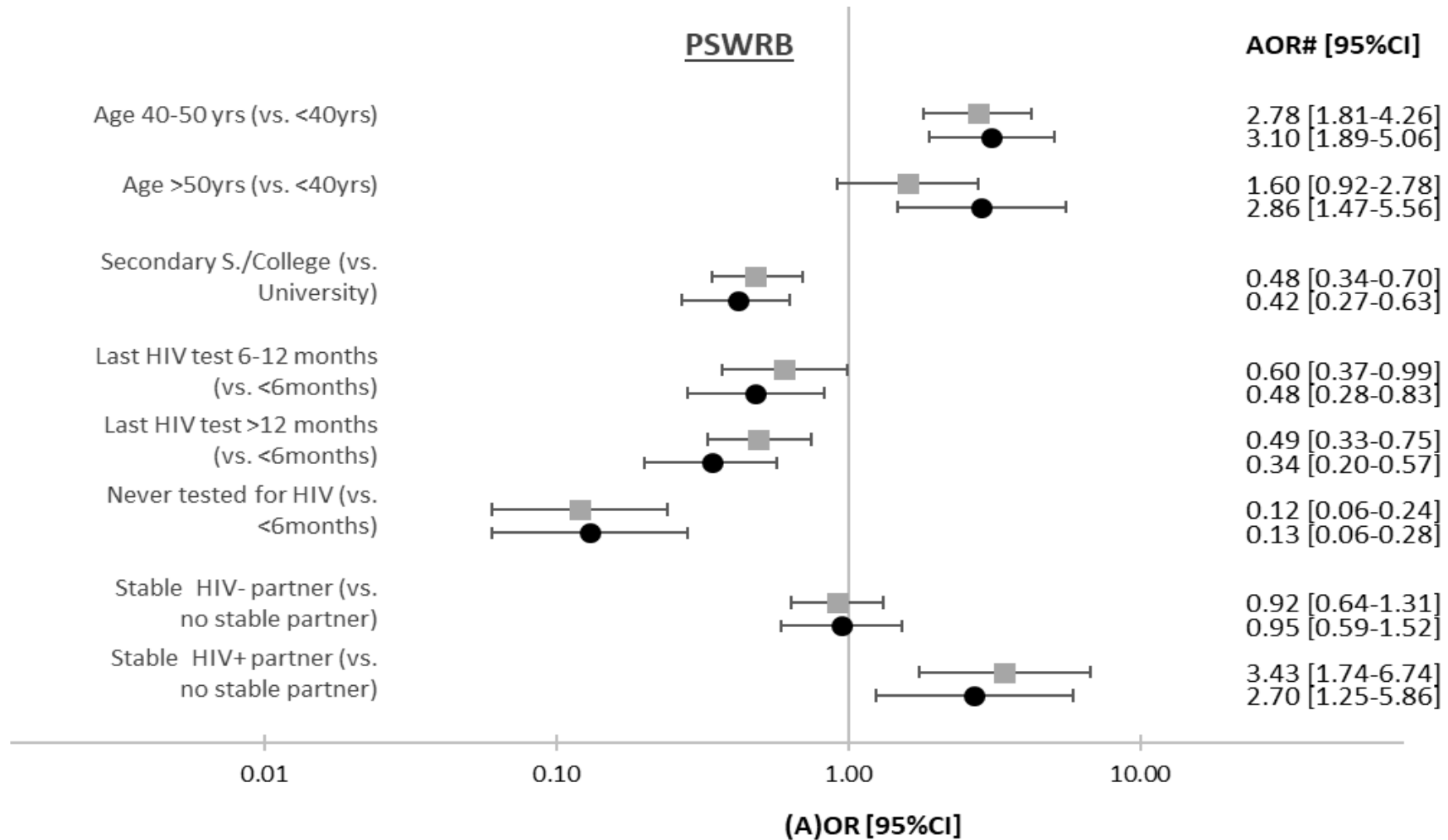


* Adjusted also for age and gender

■ Unadjusted Model ● Adjusted Model

Factors associated with perceiving accuracy of U=U message as 'high' (PSWRB)

Multivariable logistic regression analysis



■ Unadjusted Model ● Adjusted Model

Adjusted also for gender, sexual preferences, n. of partner in the last year, geographical site

Conclusions

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- A low concordance between awareness and perception of accuracy in PLWHA and physicians, suggesting still insufficient certainty were reported
- More efforts should be implemented to spread the U=U message among subgroups who might benefit from targeted educational campaigns
- Dissemination of the message among PWSRB is far from being efficaciously implemented and should represent a priority for increasing knowledge and decreasing HIV stigma
- Selection bias of web-surveys cannot be overlooked.



Acknowledgments

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