ABSTRACT

China is experiencing the most rapidly expanding HIV prevalence in the world, with the percentage of Chinese women living with HIV/AIDS also increasing significantly. Chinese women’s risk of HIV infection is heavily influenced by patriarchal cultural beliefs, Confucian doctrines, and rapid social and economic changes in China. Chinese women generally have a low level of awareness of HIV/AIDS. With inherent inferior social status and economic disadvantage, their vulnerability to HIV infection is heightened by adverse impacts of massive rural-to-urban migration, explosion of commercial sex industry, and prevalence of gender-based violence. In order to target HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs for Chinese women, their specific needs and gendered obstacles must be addressed and tackled. These include strategies that aim to fight against poverty, improve education, enhance HIV/AIDS awareness, facilitate new life-skills acquisition and behavior change, make available woman-centered services for testing and treatment of HIV, and eradicate gender-based discrimination and violence. There is also an urgent need to further develop various public health infrastructure in China, especially in remote and rural areas. The pool of gender expert in China should also be expanded to conduct a thorough gender analysis and design a national response to address the evolving HIV/AIDS epidemic in Chinese women.