



## GC News #122: September 2010

GC News is a forum for exchange on new HIV prevention options, especially for women.

### Conferences, Meetings, Trainings

**First Kenya Women's HIV Prevention Symposium in Nairobi:** GCM's Pauline Irungu was a lead organizer of the First Kenya Women's HIV Prevention Symposium, held at the Panari Hotel in Nairobi from 31 August to 1 September. During the event, Kenya's first women's HIV prevention champion was commissioned. She is Sharon Mina Olago, who co-starred as [Violet](#) in the MTV drama series Shuga.

The Symposium was co-hosted by GCM and the [National AIDS Control Council](#) and was supported in part by the International Partnership for Microbicides. Co-sponsors included Action Aid Kenya, Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO), Liverpool VCT, German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the UN team (UNDP, UNAIDS, UNIFEM, UNFPA), and the Centre for HIV Prevention and Research of the University of Nairobi (CHIVPR). The forum focused on identifying what needs to be done to ensure that HIV-prevention programmes meet the needs of women, who make up the majority of people living with HIV in Kenya.

During the meeting, HIV-service and women's organisations, community members, government representatives, researchers, donors, and other stakeholders discussed and made recommendations aimed at helping Kenyan women protect themselves against HIV. "This symposium is about putting women first. It marks an important milestone in Kenya's response to the HIV pandemic. It recognizes that women bear the greatest burden when it comes to HIV," said Yasmin Halima, director of Global Campaign. "We are delighted to be co-hosts—with civil society, community groups, and government partners—of what we hope will become the premier annual forum for women's HIV prevention in Kenya."

Read [more](#) about the symposium.

Next steps: Irungu reports that the forum's steering committee will take the recommendations from the symposium forward to the national HIV and AIDS planning mechanisms for prioritization in the country response.

**South Africa community meetings:** GCM's South Africa staff has been hitting the road since the International AIDS conference in July. On 6 August two staff members attended a meeting organized by the local AIDS council in the Durban-area village of **Hlabisa**. Participants included traditional leaders and respected women elders. Immediately following was a focus-group discussion on a range of issues related to the CAPRISA trial and results.

Three staff members attended a civil society meeting in **Durban**, South Africa on 18-19 August to discuss the results of the CAPRISA trial.

Yasmin discussed HIV prevention and shared the CAPRISA results at the **Mayihlome Women Conference**, 27-29 August at False Bay College in Khayelitsha, near Cape Town. Representatives from Brothers for Life, Black Economic Empowerment, and several churches attended.

**What's Next for Tenofovir Gel?** Yasmin Halima and Samu Dube participated in the **WHO/UNAIDS meeting** in Johannesburg, South Africa on 25-26 August to follow up on the release of CAPRISA 004 trial results and determine the pathway forward for tenofovir gel as a microbicide candidate. The nearly 60 attendees sought consensus on the next urgent steps resulting from the promising microbicide trial findings. After two intensive days of deliberation—during which the urgency of making a female-initiated HIV-prevention tool available was palpable—the group agreed on several efforts needed to confirm the product's safety and effectiveness. Two trials are being considered to study tenofovir's efficacy when used around the time of sex, with the hope of confirming the CAPRISA results. Importantly, representatives of regulatory agencies advised participants on the process of moving tenofovir gel to licensing.

### Highlighted Resources

**AIDS Pulishes Article on Effects of Mass Rape:** GCM Director Yasmin Halima co-authored an article published in AIDS on the effects of mass rape in armed conflict areas. A modeling study by UCLA's Virginie Supervie and Sally Blower and Halima found that mass rape could be causing thousands or even tens of thousands of HIV infections annually among women and girls in conflict-afflicted countries in Africa. The article outlines the probable impact on

incidence and discusses the possible short- and long-term consequences of these sexual acts. The authors recommend approaches toward policies and services to be implemented to support women in war-torn areas. ([more](#))

**CAPRISA 004 information online:** Many of us are asked to talk about the results of the CAPRISA 004 trial. If you need approved materials to help you discuss the trial and the state of the microbicides field, please visit: [www.global-campaign.org/CAPRISA004.htm](http://www.global-campaign.org/CAPRISA004.htm).

Check out the new [video](#) featuring reactions to the announcement at the International AIDS Conference.

**Strengthening communications skills:** GCM and FHI are reaching out to trial sites, advocates, and others involved in communications to let them know about a powerful new resource. The [Communications Handbook for Clinical Trials](#) informs the work of researchers, study coordinators, and communications professionals involved in clinical trials of new drugs or interventions. Incorporating lessons learned and best practices from trial experiences in countries worldwide, the Handbook provides practical guidance for anticipating and responding to the challenges posed by clinical research, especially in resource-limited settings. It was developed with input from nearly 100 individuals, representing 15 countries and 30 organizations.

The book includes:

- Sample communications plans for clinical trials
- Communications and crisis-planning templates and checklists
- Scenario-planning tools to prepare for the release of trial results
- Ideas on delegating communications tasks to reduce demand on key site staff
- Tips and techniques on how to communicate effectively in interviews, in meetings, and with the media.

The *Communications Handbook for Clinical Trials* is available as a free download online at [www.mmci-communications.org/resources/communications-handbook-for-clinical-trials](http://www.mmci-communications.org/resources/communications-handbook-for-clinical-trials).

Printed copies are available for purchase. For more information, please email [handbook@mmci-communications.org](mailto:handbook@mmci-communications.org) and provide your full contact information.

Kindly extend my regards to the team, and thank you for the good product. I like its simplicity, clarity, and interesting and informative pictures and graphics. I am happy to have been part of this, and I hope to work with you and your team in developing other informational materials.

-Victoria Oyer, International Centre for Reproductive Health

## Advocacy in Action

Murewa, Zimbabwe was the site of a community workshop conducted by GCM fellows Munyaradzi Chimwara and Cynthia Mungofa in collaboration with Dr. Nyaradzo Mgodzi of UZ-UCSF. The 31 August event, held to present the results of the CAPRISA 004 study and to discuss the [VOICE](#) trial, aired on national television. The local parliamentarian, Dr. David Parirenyatwa, attended this rural-community meeting and served as discussant.



Cynthia is working on a project to produce a video that captures the voices of rural women regarding microbicides. The project aims to widen the constituency who are aware of this tenofovir-gel trial and its implications.

In Kenya, Patrick Mwai Muchai worked with GCM and his host KANCO to exhibit at the Agricultural Society of Kenya Show. The event supported the country's progress towards Vision 2030, a Kenyan government economic development plan. During the week of 9 August, Patrick staffed the booth, providing materials to interested visitors and disseminating the results of the CAPRISA 004 study. He also noted questions and concerns raised by visitors regarding microbicides studies.

On 17 August, Patrick presented at a Mombasa meeting of the Constituency AIDS Control Committee, which comprises CBOs and NGOs who share their experiences, challenges, and success stories. He showed the GCM video "In Women's Hands" and provided information about microbicides to the 44 representatives, including district-level health officers, and listened to their views, fears, myths, and misconceptions about microbicides.



Three days later, on 20 August, he delivered a similar presentation to nearly 100 students at the Mombasa Provincial Library as part of a collaboration between KANCO and the Kenya National Library Services that provides HIV/AIDS and reproductive health information to young people.

Notes from these activities are helping to inform GCM on the way that people in countries where we work think about the field and about HIV-prevention research.

## Staffing Changes



Deborah Baron, who headed the Microbicides Media and Communications Initiative and led the work of the fellows, has left GCM. She will remain in South Africa and continue her work on HIV prevention. We wish her all the best. For now, [Melissa May](#) will serve as interim coordinator of the group.

## How can you help?

If you can help increase awareness of the realities of HIV-prevention research, let us know. You may want to post accurate messages about the CAPRISA trial and results and other HIV-prevention research on your website and in your newsletters. You may want to speak about microbicide trials at community meetings or in discussions with reporters. Let GCM know if we can help you communicate the importance of this work on the lives of women and their partners everywhere. Email us at [info@global-campaign.org](mailto:info@global-campaign.org).

Follow us on Twitter at GCMicrobicides.



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