



GC News #123: December 2010

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

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Conferences, Meetings, Trainings

FDA offers hope for expedited review and approval of tenofovir gel: GCM shared information about the FDA's announcement to fast track a new drug application if the VOICE trial results of the daily use of tenofovir show that the product is safe and effective. We are committed to the advancement of this and future HIV-prevention candidates. Read more about the [announcement](#).

3rd Botswana International HIV Conference: Yasmin Halima and Samu Dube attended the 3rd Botswana International HIV Conference from 13-16 October. Halima presented on developments in PrEP and microbicide research. Dube discussed issues of access and availability of prevention technologies for women.



Community Dialogues: Samu Dube led a community dialogue in KwaZulu Natal's Sisonke District on 18 October.

On 14 and 15 December, GCM organized a civil society dialogue in Lusaka, Zambia to discuss with key community based HIV and women's rights organizations the current and future landscape for HIV prevention research and its place in Zambia's HIV prevention strategy.

Kenya Happenings: Pauline Irungu attended a local consultation on oral pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in Kisumu, Kenya. This important meeting, hosted by the FEM-PrEP Bondo site, included representatives from government agencies and institutions conducting PrEP research in Kenya. She participated in an East African

Regional Consultation on PrEP organized by UNAIDS and WHO, bringing together representatives from 10 Eastern African and Horn of Africa countries.

On October 28, Irungu made a presentation on women's HIV research priorities to the members of the Kenya HIV/AIDS Research Coordination Mechanism (KARSCOM). These priorities are drawn from the recommendations of the Women's HIV Prevention Symposium, which was co-hosted by GCM, NACC, and partners.

Women meet to discuss HIV Prevention Options at the Kenya Annual Gender Festival: On a rainy Saturday morning, a group of women drawn from diverse provinces in Kenya gathered at a stand set up by the Global Campaign for Microbicides (GCM) at the Kenya Railways Club grounds, the venue of the 2010 Kenya Annual Gender Festival. This stand was mounted on November 27, with the aim of providing a space for the participants to discuss women's HIV prevention and the need for new tools that can reduce their vulnerability to HIV. Irungu and Peninah Murunga together with the Kenya Women's HIV Prevention Champion, Sharon Olago co-facilitated the two and half hour session.

To lay a foundation for the discussions, the co-facilitators led the participants through a process of reflecting on the



everyday lives of women and girls in their locality in relation to situations that make them vulnerable to HIV infection. Key issues including gender power relations, increasing gender-based violence especially sexual violence and abuse of minors were highlighted as exposing women and girls to infection. Social roles of women as care providers to family members, and even women foregoing care so that their families can access it even when their health is on the line were also cited. Limited information and access to healthcare services was also noted as a challenge to women's prevention.

GCM staff gave a brief overview of HIV prevention research and the emerging prevention options especially microbicides. Many of the women said that they had never heard of microbicides. One participant from Kuria, Nyanza Province asked, "...does such a tool exist? I have never heard of it. But in my Kuria community, many women do not know how to prevent HIV." Towards the end of the session, a participant from Turkana, Rift Valley Province said, "I would like to learn more about this research, it can help women in Turkana to protect them from HIV." The session concluded with many participants expressing their interest to learn more about microbicides and other HIV prevention options for women.



Women and Microbicides: What comes after the CAPRISA Trial event: GCM co-sponsored a high profile event on 30 November hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa. Women and Microbicides: What comes after the CAPRISA Trial? with FHI and Global Health Council. The discussion panel moderated by Halima consisted of Ward Cates, FHI, Salim Abdool Karim, CAPRISA, Henry Gabelnick, CONRAD, Judy Manning, USAID, and Ronald Nardi, IPM. Opening remarks were made by Nomonde Xundu, the South African Health Attaché and closing remarks by Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool. (See the discussion [here](#))

Kenya National Stakeholder's Meeting: GCM convened a National Stakeholder's Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya to share results from GCM's landscape analysis of processes for review of clinical research on 6 December. In a dynamic day of dialogue, senior representatives from leading agencies including the National Council of Science and Technology (NCST), Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), University of Nairobi Ethics Committee and advocates from KANCO and others discussed recommendations for strengthening structures for HIV prevention research in Kenya.



Global Advocates Telebriefing on iPrEx Trial Results: To mark the historical milestone of the first pill to prevent HIV, GCM organized a Telebriefing for Global Advocates on 7 December to discuss the iPrEx trial results and what it means for African men who have sex with men and women. Over a hundred participants joined a panel of experts including Linda-Gail Bekker, Investigator for the iPrEx Cape Town site, Samu Dube, GCM, Cate Hankins, UNAIDS, Patrick Mwai Muchai, GCM Fellow, David Stanton, USAID and, Sheryl Zwierski, NIH in a discussion moderated by Halima. (Hear the [recording](#))

Trainings: More Prevention Research Literacy Trainings (PRLT) trainings were delivered in Johannesburg on 9 and 10 December. Further PRLT trainings are to be scheduled for Nairobi, Kenya in the first quarter of 2011.



News and Announcements

A Day in the Life ... Photo Essay: GCM is developing a photo essay titled "A Day in the Life of a Clinical Trial," that uses the power of images to describe the courage of women who take part in microbicides trials. The exhibit will showcase the importance of—and encourage support for—HIV-prevention research.

Vivienne Naidoo and Yasmin Halima travelled to Zimbabwe 18-22 October with Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Martha Rial. Accompanied by GCM fellow Munya Chimwara, they documented the stories of five remarkable women who had participated in the HPTN 035 trial. The photo exhibit will be launched in March 2011.

MTN new study testing rectal safety of tenofovir: On 13 October, Microbicides Trial Network (MTN) announced the start of a new trial examining the safety and acceptability of tenofovir gel when used rectally. Known as [MTN-007](#), the study will help determine if the gel should be evaluated further for its potential to prevent HIV among both men and women who engage in receptive anal intercourse. The trial is slated to enroll 60 men and women across three MTN-affiliated sites in the United States: the University of Pittsburgh, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and Fenway Health in Boston.

Even if additional research confirms the findings from the [CAPRISA 004](#) trial—that tenofovir gel is safe and moderately effective for vaginal use—scientists cannot assume the same will be true for rectal sex, which is a key driver of the HIV pandemic around the world.

USAID announces two new HIV-prevention-related grants: USAID awarded \$5 million to CONRAD for the development of vaginal rings that deliver the contraceptive levonorgestrel combined with tenofovir to protect against HIV and STI infection. Henry Gabelnick, executive director of CONRAD, said "This award will allow us to expedite the evaluation of a dual-protection technology that promises to be a breakthrough in the simultaneous prevention of unplanned pregnancies and HIV infection." This multipurpose, combination ring would address two vital reproductive health needs in one product.

The other award is aimed at clarifying the pathways to regulatory approval of multipurpose prevention technologies, which are designed to address the multiple needs of preventing STIs, RTIs, HIV, and/or unintended pregnancy and help alleviate the heavy health and economic toll those conditions can cause. This three-year project will be led by the Population Council.

Advocacy Update – Fellowship Report

Munya Chimwara attended a workshop, organized by Southern African Aids Trust, about engaging communities and the media on new prevention technologies. The event was held on 22 October in Kadoma, Zimbabwe.

Patrick Mwai met with 300 adolescents at 10 events in the Mombasa area, presenting information on microbicides, the CAPRISA 004 trial, and other new prevention technologies, including PrEP and vaccines. This was part of the Global Fund Round 7 activities.

Communications Update

Melissa May was an invited presenter at Development Outreach and Communications Officer (DOC) training meeting, hosted by USAID in Washington, DC. Nearly 150 USAID staffers from around the world attended the interactive event.

May met with the Public Relations Society of America's Educators Academy during their annual conference. She shared flyers and demo copies of the [Communications Handbook for Clinical Trials](#). She then spoke at the PR Students Society meeting the following day on nonprofit PR. Her abstract titled *Creating a Powerful Resource for Clinical Trials Communications* was accepted for presentation at the Public Relations Society of America's 2011 Health Academy Conference. May also participated in the PrEP Communications Working Group meetings in New York on 18-19 October.

Communications Planning and Budgeting: The *Communications Handbook for Clinical Trials* provides practical guidance to clinical trial staff and research partners on a range of communications issues, including Chapter 2's focus on planning and budgeting. Communicating results to key stakeholders is an ethical requirement of good research.

Chapter 2 helps staff strengthen their trials by:

- Alerting the study team to previous media coverage and potential controversy.
- Pinpointing areas of cultural, political, or scientific sensitivity.
- Ensuring the wise use of resources.
- Identifying opportunities for cost-sharing and stretching resources.
- Building communications capacity among the study team.
- Helping delegate and share the workload.

Communications Planning Tip:

- Identify stakeholders connected to your trial.
- Anticipate opposition.
- Develop a realistic communications budget.
- Assemble a communications team.
- Select appropriate spokespersons with the authority and skills to field difficult questions.
- Provide comprehensive media training to those representatives.
- Determine protocols for and train staff to handle inquiries from stakeholders.

The Handbook was developed with input from nearly 100 individuals, representing 15 countries and 30 organizations. [Download](#) it for free or order a hard copy by completing the form online and mailing it with your payment of \$75 for commercial organizations and \$45 for nonprofit organizations. Complimentary copies may be available for qualified applicants based in developing countries. Send questions to handbook@mmci-communications.org.

News and Staffing Changes

GCM welcomes Thokozile Budaza, Senior Program Officer in the Johannesburg office. Thoko will be in charge of training and capacity building initiatives. Thoko brings a great deal of experience in HIV including from her roles at the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and Africare on the Eastern Cape.

GCM is currently interviewing for two Program Officers to be based in Lusaka, Zambia – GCM's newest country office.

Melissa May left GCM in November. We would like to thank Melissa for her contribution to the work of GCM, and wish her the very best for the future.

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