



Global Campaign News – Issue #83 9 July 2007

Welcome to the *Global Campaign News*! The *Global Campaign News* is a forum for international exchange on microbicide activities and information with an aim to build a more informed and integrated movement for microbicide development and other prevention options against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. This and previous issues of *GC News* are available online at <http://www.global-campaign.org/gcarchives.htm>

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Progress in Microbicide Clinical Trials

Global

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News Alert, 20 June 2007

The Alliance for Microbicide Development is pleased to announce the results from two Data Safety Monitoring Board reviews of ongoing trials of microbicide candidates, as well as the initiation of a new trial, CAPRISA004.

The Microbicide Development Program (MDP) has released a statement on the results of the June 18th Independent Data Monitoring Committee (IDMC) meeting on MDP301, a Phase 3 clinical trial of two doses of PRO2000 (0.5 percent and 2.0 percent). After reviewing all data collected to date, the IDMC reported that the MDP301 trial should continue according to the protocol and congratulated the investigators on their progress. The MDP Trial Steering Committee met on June 19th and accepted the recommendation of the IDMC, which will meet again in 6 months. (See MDP website for more detail: <http://www.mdp.mrc.ac.uk/> <<http://www.mdp.mrc.ac.uk/>>)

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and the Microbicide Trials Network (MTN) have announced the outcome of the Independent Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) review of HPTN 035, a Phase 2/2B study of the safety and effectiveness of BufferGel(r) and 0.5% PRO2000/5 Gel (P). The DSMB

identified no safety concerns and recommended that the trial continue as designed. NIAID Director Anthony S. Fauci concurred with this recommendation.

The Center for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) has announced the initiation on May 23rd of CAPRISA004, its Phase 2/2b randomized controlled trial to assess the safety and effectiveness of 1% Tenofovir/PMPA vaginal gel for prevention of HIV infection. The study population will be an estimated 980 sexually-active HIV-uninfected women aged 18 to 40 years in CAPRISA's Vulindlela and eThekweni Clinical Research Sites. (For a more complete summary about this trial, go to <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3783/39334/39740/40519/40550.aspx>; for background information, visit www.caprisa.org <<http://www.caprisa.org/>> .)

Please join the Alliance in congratulating these trial teams on their progress.

Advocacy in action

Third South African AIDS Conference: New Hopes for Consensus Africa

The third South African AIDS conference took place in Durban, South Africa from 4-8 June 2007 under the theme, "Building Consensus on Prevention Treatment and Care."

Unlike previous conferences in South Africa, this year's meeting featured a minimum of political conflict between government and civil society. Instead, over 4,000 delegates gathered to celebrate the successful agreement of a new national plan on AIDS that has broad support across all sectors of society.

"We have crossed the Rubicon with regard to HIV," Mark Heywood, South African National AIDS Council's recently-elected Deputy Chair noted at the closing ceremony. "This conference has shown that thousands of delegates are working from the same page." Heywood, who received the declaration on behalf of SANAC, promised delegates it would inform implementation of the country's recently-adopted National Strategic Plan (NSP) for HIV and AIDS (<http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2007/aidsplan2007/index.html>), which he described as "an opportunity to bring social repair to our communities." The new NSP, which has been allocated R45 billion (US\$6.1 billion) over 5 years, aims both to bring treatment to 80% of those who need it by 2011 and to reduce the rate of new infections by 50%.

This year's conference also saw the addition of a new track on community. Sipho Mthathi of the AIDS lobby group the Treatment Action Campaign also urged delegates to start thinking about the community role in the HIV/AIDS fight as central to the NSP's successful implementation.

The Conference's consensus document, developed during a two-day meeting among stakeholders in May, outlines the steps most urgently needed to fight the country's HIV/AIDS epidemic, including commitments:

- to align the national policy on HIV testing and counseling with the latest WHO guidelines;
- to address gender-based violence as part of a national strategy linked to HIV prevention programs;
- to promote safer infant feeding practices for HIV-infected mothers;
- to make male circumcision available and accessible to every man who wants it; and
- to promote the use of female condoms and make available any new prevention technology that is at least 50% effective.

The full conference declaration can be found at:

<http://www.sa-aidsconference.com/CONFERENCE%20DECLARATION.pdf>.

Sisters do it for themselves in Edinburgh Europe

Out of the proverbial Scottish mist, dozens of African women in colourful traditional dress converged on the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh on the 21st June to talk about the need for new HIV prevention options for women in Scotland and worldwide.

Organised by HIV Scotland's African and Minority Ethnic HIV Project (AMEHP) in partnership with the UK Campaign's African Working Group, 'Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves: Women, Sexual Health and HIV' was the first event of its kind to take place in Scotland. Over 120 participants from all over the country attended.

In what was her first full week in her new role, newly appointed Minister for Public Health, Shona Robison promised her support in raising awareness about the need for microbicides. She was followed by Mukami McCrum, Chief Executive of the Central Scotland Commission for Racial Equality, exploding the myth that 'good Christian women don't get HIV' in her speech on the links between human rights and the feminisation of the pandemic. Professor Robin Shattock spoke of women's fear of being barren being greater than that of acquiring HIV and his conviction that if one in four Scottish women were HIV positive, that action would be more decisive. In the afternoon, working groups explored how to take specific advocacy objectives forward both locally and in Africa.

Eunice Sinyemu, Project Officer for AMEHP and a driving force behind the conference, said 'Whilst we are not arguing that we should be left to do it on our own, at the same time, we women can get to the heart of the matter and we can bring about change. This is what this conference is all about'.

The event, funded by the Scottish Executive, Rocco Forte Hotels and the Global Campaign for Microbicides, attracted considerable media attention, with national radio and newspaper coverage. Speaking on BBC Radio Scotland, Susan Deacon, former Health Minister and Chair of the conference said that women are most at risk and yet least protected: 'a microbicide could not only give individual women greater choice, but also have a major public health impact'.

To download the conference brochure, please visit:

<http://www.global-campaign.org/clientfiles/Brochure21stJune2007.pdf>



'Sisters are doing it for themselves!' Pictured from left to right: Annabel Mowat, Georgina Caswell, Susan Deacon, Julie Hancox, Mukami McCrum, Martha Baillie, Mildred Zimunya, Toju Cline-Cole and Eunice Sinyemu.
PHOTOGRAPH BY FEI SUN.

Introducing the advocates...

In an effort to introduce advocates to each other around the world, the editors of GC News are launching a new feature in every edition. "Introducing the advocates" will profile the activities of individual or a group advocating for new prevention technologies. The profiles may also suggest ways in which advocates around the world can help their efforts. To be considered for a profile in future issues, send a short note to info@global-campaign.org.

AIDS Calgary Awareness Association & Capri Rasmussen North America

The AIDS Calgary Awareness Association is a community-based HIV/AIDS organization based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The agency has been a member of the Canadian Microbicides Advocacy Network since 2003. Since 2005, Capri Rasmussen has been coordinating their microbicides activities. In 2006 they organized an event using the Global Campaign for Microbicides' *Giving Women Power Over AIDS* exhibit. The exhibit has been translated into French to make it bilingual, and adapted slightly for a Canadian audience by the Canadian AIDS Society.

“Through the planning process, connecting with community stakeholders, and the actual event we were able to significantly increase our understanding of microbicides. The event allowed multiple stakeholders and the general public to learn about HIV, gender issues and microbicides”, says Capri.



AIDS Calgary also participated in the 3rd Canadian Microbicides Symposium, helping to develop the Canadian Microbicides Action Plan, a multi-sector plan outlining domestic and international contributions Canada could make to microbicides development efforts.

Capri Rasmussen and Shaleena Theophilus, Coordinator of MAG-Net.

Capri and other staff at AIDS Calgary provide education sessions on microbicides to interested agencies and groups in the community. “We are using the *In Women’s Hands* video that GCM developed in our outreach and training sessions. We also presented an education session on microbicides at the Alberta Harm Reduction Conference this year.”

The Global Campaign for Microbicides Welcomes John Mutsambi South Africa



The Global Campaign for Microbicides is pleased to announce the newest addition to our staff, John Mutsambi. Next month John will begin as a Community Trainer and Facilitator for the Southern African region. John will be working to improve the active role of community-based and civil society organizations in microbicide research.

Mr. Mutsambi’s career of more than 10 years in HIV prevention and microbicides and more than 15 years in community involvement make him uniquely qualified to fill the position of Community Researcher and Trainer. He received his Masters degree in Cultural Anthropology and Social Transformation from the California Institute of Integral Studies in 2005. Mr. Mutsambi directed the Community Department for the University of Zimbabwe - University of California San Francisco (UZ - UCSF) Collaborative Research Programme in Women’s Health for the past three years. We are sure he will be an outstanding addition to our team and ask you to join us welcoming him to the Global Campaign!

John will be based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and can be reached at jmustambi@path.org.

Highlighted Resources

Report from the International Working Group on HIV-Positive Women & Microbicides

The International Working Group on HIV-Positive Women & Microbicides, a group convened in response to HIV-positive women’s groups wishing to engage more fully in microbicides research and development, has released their final report. The report details question and answer sessions between HIV-positive women, scientists and researchers over a six month period. The full report, *Towards an HIV+ Women’s Microbicide Agenda: Questions &*

Answers from a Dialogue with Scientists, is now available at:

<http://www.global-campaign.org/clientfiles/IWGHPW.pdf>.

IAS 2007 Conference Coverage



This summer, the 4th annual International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention will be held in Sydney, Australia from July 22nd – 25th. IAS has partnered with kaisernetwork.org to provide free, online coverage over the 4-day conference including podcasts, webcasts, presentations, news summaries and interviews with newsmakers.

For more information and to sign up for their daily update emails from the conference, visit:

www.kaisernetwork.org/ias2007.

We welcome your input and contributions for future issues! Please send emails to: info@global-campaign.org. If you would like to unsubscribe to the *Global Campaign News*, please reply to this e-mail with the subject line: UNSUBSCRIBE