



## Global Campaign News December 2001

Welcome to the biweekly *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 STDs.

We welcome your input and contributions. Correspondence can be addressed to [info@global-campaign.org](mailto: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.

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### **Global Campaign Presses WHO for timely release of Consensus Statement on N-9**

At last year's World AIDS Conference in Durban, South Africa, the Global Campaign called upon the WHO to immediately hold an expert group meeting to provide guidance on the use of nonoxynol-9 (N-9) containing products in light of the disappointing results of the UNAIDS trial of Col-1492 (Advantage-S), a contraceptive gel containing 52 milligrams of N-9. At the time, preliminary results suggested that use of the product did not prevent HIV or other STDs, and that frequent use may actually increase risk by causing disruptions in the vaginal epithelium.

After much delay, WHO finally held such a consultation on November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> in Geneva. Until advocates objected, the resulting consensus statement was to be embargoed until the final publication of the UNAIDS trial results—a policy that would have delayed release of the statement for at least another 6 to 8 months. The Global Campaign was instrumental in convincing WHO to issue the statement prior to publication (by the end of the year) and to sponsor jointly with the Campaign a briefing for policymakers and the press on the consensus conclusions.

### **Microbicides and Female Condoms at ICAAP**

The topic of prevention methods for women received excellent coverage at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, in Melbourne Australia, October 5-10, 2001. Family Health International sponsored a microbicide symposium featuring Dr. Ken Mayer, who provided an overview of microbicide development. At both the symposium and an abstract-driven panel on microbicides, participants heard observations from a Phase 2 microbicide safety study in Chiang Rai, Thailand. Dr. Peter Kilmarx reported that in Chiang Rai, 76% of HIV-positive women have never had any sexual partner besides their husband. In a different study on the acceptability of microbicides in

Chennai, India, Dr. Suniti Solomon and colleagues discovered that although few married women perceive themselves at risk of HIV, most acknowledge that they are unable to bring up the topic of condom use with their husbands. These sobering facts clearly underscore the need for a prevention method like microbicides.

A female condom symposium attracted nearly one hundred people with questions ranging from "How does one use the female condom?" to "Can it be reused?" The Global Campaign addressed the over-arching question demanding prevention options for women by holding a skills-building workshop on advocacy. With help from colleagues Manju Chatani, Bobby Ramakant, Renu Seth, Mitchell Warren, and other workshop participants, the session covered strategies of identifying allies and building constituencies, developing and prioritizing strategies, and working with the media and electronic outreach resources.

### **Global Campaign Spearheads Successful Microbicides Symposium in San Francisco**

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001 the Global Campaign co-sponsored a half-day symposium on the state of microbicide science and advocacy for 70 key opinion leaders in California. Dubbed, "A Moment in Time," the event highlighted the potential that microbicides could play in transforming the landscape of reproductive health for women and men in both the industrial and developing world. Coming barely a month after the tragedy on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the symposium reminded everyone that some disasters are preventable, if individuals join forces to ensure that money flows to vital public health research. Details of the event and program can be found at [www.sfaf.org/symposium](http://www.sfaf.org/symposium). The event was co-sponsored by San Francisco AIDS Foundation, the Women's Foundation, Microbicides as an Alternative Solution, Planned Parenthood Golden Gate, UCSF AIDS Research Institute, UC Berkeley Center for Family and Community Health, and Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Stanford.

### **Advocates in Action:**

#### ***US Advocates Generate Groundswell of Support for Microbicide Development Act***

Months of careful preparation came to fruition on December 1st, World AIDS Day, with the introduction of "The Microbicide Development Act" (S-1752) into the US Senate. The Act calls for the creation of special programs for microbicide research at both the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Together the Global Campaign and the Alliance for Microbicide Development helped generate hundreds of calls and emails to congressional offices to recruit original co-sponsors for the bill. Pam Norick, legislative advisor to both the Campaign and the Alliance, noted: "For the first time, it felt like we had a real grassroots base we could draw upon. Its exciting to see the results of all the hard work put in by local Campaign sites and Alliance members to cultivate support outside the Washington Beltway ."

#### ***International Advocates***

Bobby Ramakant, key correspondent with the Global Campaign and Health and Development Networks, has started a bi-weekly column on HIV and woman-controlled prevention for the newsletter of the South Asian Women's Forum. You can find his column, called "M-Power" at <http://www.sawf.org/newedit/edit10152001/mpower.asp>

Gynecologist Dr. Bode-law Faleyimu has been incorporating microbicide education into his various speaking engagements in Nigeria. In particular, he has reached out to directors and leaders of women's and youth organizations, all of whom have expressed great enthusiasm about the potential of microbicides.

Pauline Ngunjiri from Kenya recently attended the annual meeting of the Population and Reproductive Health Donor Affinity group, held in Santa Cruz, California. She spoke of issues of HIV/AIDS in developing countries and used the opportunity to emphasize the urgency of funding microbicide development.