



## Global Campaign News – Issue #42 September 29, 2004

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. This and previous issues of GC News are available online at <http://www.global-campaign.org/gcnews.htm>

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### London School briefing papers on microbicides now available Global

We are pleased to introduce a series of briefing papers developed for the Global Campaign of Microbicides and International Family Health by the HIV Tools Research Group at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Each briefing paper provides an easy to read synopsis of the London School's extensive modeling work on various issues related to microbicides. We hope you will find these papers useful for your own information and in your advocacy. The entire series is available at the Global Campaign's download center: [www.global-campaign.org/download.htm](http://www.global-campaign.org/download.htm) The series includes a set of five briefing papers, as summarized below.

#### **Are people using condoms? November 2003**

The authors analyze data from Macro International/MEASURE and Family Health International to examine condom use in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the paper, the data illustrates "significant increases in condom use often arise following intervention activity, with the greatest increases being in commercial and causal sex. However there are generally only small increases achieved within steady partnerships. Overall levels of condom use decrease as the degree of intimacy or regularity of the partner increases. Even amongst those who do use condoms, few condom users achieve 100% consistent use." The authors recommend both increased investment in condom promotion and distribution as well as increased investment in microbicides to fill the current gap of condom use in long-term steady relationships, where condom use is generally low.

#### **The potential impact of microbicides in Johannesburg, South Africa. June 2004**

The authors use mathematical modeling in combination with site-specific data to project the extent to which a microbicide will reduce HIV transmission in Hillbrow, an inner city area of Johannesburg. Authors find that a 40% HIV and STI efficacious microbicide would reduce the district's overall HIV incidence by 9% if used by 75% of the district's population in 50% of non-condom protected acts. Reduction in condom use following microbicide introduction (condom migration) was seen only to be a potential concern among partnerships with high levels of condom use.

#### **The potential impact of microbicides in Bagalkot District, Karnataka, India. June 2004**

Similar to the Johannesburg analysis, the authors analyzed the impact of a partially effective microbicides on HIV transmission rates in the Bagalkot District in Southern India. Authors find that a 40% HIV and STI efficacious microbicide would avert 18% of the 5150 expected HIV infections – mostly averting infections among clients and their non-commercial sexual partners. Similar to the Johannesburg study, condom migration is primarily a concern

if sex workers are using condoms with very high consistency, if microbicide efficacy is low, and microbicide use is low.

#### **A comparison of the potential impact of microbicides in two contrasting African settings. August 2004**

In a similar analysis, the authors compare the extent to which a microbicide reduces HIV transmission in two contrasting African settings: Hillbrow, an inner city area of Johannesburg and Cotonou, an urban area in Benin which has a less generalized HIV epidemic, lower HIV incidence, and lower condom use in long term partnerships. The authors find that a 40% HIV and STI efficacious microbicide would result in a 9% decrease in HIV incidence in Hillbrow, and a 39% decrease in Cotonou. In both settings, the impact of the microbicide arises both from its HIV efficacy and also from the indirect benefits associated with the microbicide reducing levels of STI transmission. Authors recommend further investigation into the STI efficacy of microbicides.

#### **Preparing to deliver: introduction of microbicides. July 2004**

In an effort to prepare for microbicide introduction, the authors conducted an economic review of the issues related to market development, including delivery and costs, of both contraceptives and other health products (e.g., mosquito nets). The authors compare public sector distribution, social marketing, and commercial provision of these health products. They recommend that although mix of these delivery channels must be considered, but public sector distribution will need to be a priority. They also emphasize the importance of a well-developed promotion strategy to minimize the potential of stigma, reinforce public health messages, enhance initial start-up, and ensure subsequent expansion of markets.

## **IPM enters into a preliminary agreement with GlaxoSmithKline North America**

On September 24<sup>th</sup>, the International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) announced a new agreement with the pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline PLC. GlaxoSmithKline, whose AIDS drugs include the combination pills Combivir and Trizivir, will select and provide proprietary anti-HIV compounds to IPM. IPM will then test these compounds for their potential as microbicides at St. George's Medical School in London. The agreement has been structured as a material transfer agreement.

According to IPM's CEO, Dr. Zeda Rosenberg, "IPM's agreement with GSK marks the beginning of an important chapter in the quest to identify and develop new topical HIV prevention technologies that could be used by women." "This is precisely the kind of collaboration needed between the public and private sectors to develop innovative ways to prevent HIV," said Richard Klausner, MD, executive director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Health program.

## **Microbicides featured in Ms. Magazine North America**

In its Fall 2004 edition, Ms. Magazine featured excerpts from Stephen Lewis keynote address at Microbicides 2004. Stephen Lewis is the former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations and is currently the U. N. Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa. We want to applaud Mr. Lewis and the editors of Ms. Magazine for continuing their vocal and visible support for microbicide research and development. The full text of Mr. Lewis' speech can be found at: <http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/news.html> or <http://www.microbicides2004.org.uk/progtue.html>

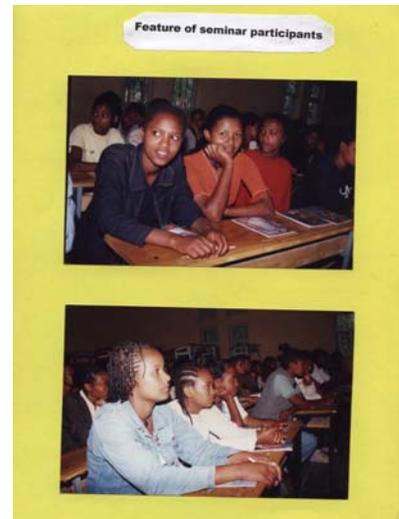
## Youth advocacy and education in Ethiopia

### Africa

This summer, 120 young female schoolteachers and students attended an advocacy seminar on microbicides development and advocacy at the Awassa Comprehensive Secondary School in Ethiopia.

According to Mesfin Afework, a guidance counselor in Awassa, “The school can play an important role in shaping the future generation, however, only by making both teachers and students understand the concepts and the power of microbicides in preventing the ill effects of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV/AIDS.” The participants committed themselves to establishing a girls club in the school and sensitizing the rest of the school community and their parents about the potential of microbicides.

The Global Campaign sends best wishes to Mesfin and the Awassa Comprehensive Secondary School for their future endeavors.



## New fact sheet on Nonoxynol-9

### Global

*By Chelsea Polis and Katy Backes, Ibis Reproductive Health*

Researchers at Ibis Reproductive Health and the Reproductive Health Technologies Project have produced a fact sheet presenting current data on nonoxynol-9 (N-9). The N-9 fact sheet is available at: [www.cervicalbarriers.org](http://www.cervicalbarriers.org).

This fact sheet presents current safety and efficacy data on the spermicide nonoxynol-9 (N-9) for contraception and for preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) agree on the following recommendations:

- N-9 is a safe, effective contraceptive option for women at low risk for HIV/STIs who do not use the product more than once a day
- N-9 should not be used to prevent HIV/STIs
- N-9 should not be used rectally

In the U.S., there are only two over-the-counter (OTC) female-controlled contraceptive options available – the female condom and N-9 spermicides. There is a need expand OTC contraceptive options available to women, including the development of microbicides and alternative spermicides.

## UK training day a great success

### Europe

On 17<sup>th</sup> September, the UK Campaign for Microbicides, in partnership with Global Campaign Europe, the National AIDS Trust, and Terrence Higgins Trust, held a highly successful training day for advocates in London designed to raise awareness of the British role in microbicide development and mobilize NGOs around a renewed campaign. Twenty-five activists from a range of backgrounds engaged in ‘participant-friendly’ presentations on the science, the role of the community and the UK advocacy agenda.

The scientific panel included presentations from Dr Robin Shattock (St Georges Hospital), Fern Terris-Prestholt (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and Dr Alan Stone (International Working Group on Microbicides). In a change from the usual transfer of knowledge from ‘experts’ to advocates, four members of the Campaign spoke about why they joined the Campaign and the issues that they need scientists to address with in order to become more effective in their advocacy. Among other things, the need to better describe and explain what is meant by partial effectiveness was identified by the scientific panel as an important next step.

In workshops led by the Global Campaign for Microbicides, IAVI and the Terrence Higgins Trust, participants explored in depth some of the ethical, political and community issues surrounding microbicide advocacy. The day concluded with a discussion about campaign goals and activities for the next 18 months, during which the UK preside over both the G8 and the European Union. This upcoming term is seen as an important window of opportunity to discuss the HIV and STI prevention needs of women and men both in the global South but also closer to home within the EU.

## **Cervical barrier methods: expanding women's prevention options**

### **Global**

*By Chelsea Polis and Katy Backes, Ibis Reproductive Health*

A recent issue of American Sexuality Magazine, Volume 2, Issue 5, features an article entitled "Cervical Barrier Methods: Expanding Women's Options for HIV/STI Prevention." This article highlights the urgent need for HIV/STI prevention methods for women and discusses research on cervical barriers as potential prevention methods.

The diaphragm, a cervical barrier method that has long been used as a contraceptive, is being investigated by researchers in Southern Africa as a potential candidate for a female-controlled HIV/STI prevention method. Observational studies suggest that the diaphragm may offer some protection against chlamydia, gonorrhea, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), and cervical cancer, but more research is needed to translate these findings into clinical recommendations.

Several factors make the cervix biologically more vulnerable to HIV/STIs than other areas of the female reproductive system. First, the delicate lining of the cervix is more easily damaged than the thicker cell lining of the vagina. Secondly, recent evidence suggests that the cervix has a concentration of cells with HIV receptors, increasing its vulnerability to HIV infection. Finally, the cervix is the entryway to the upper genital tract, so covering the cervix also protects these areas from infection.

If current research shows that the diaphragm can reduce the risk of HIV, women may soon have an alternative prevention methods which protect against both pregnancy and HIV/STIs.

The article can be accessed online at <http://nsrc.sfsu.edu>.

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We welcome your input and contributions for future issues!

Correspondence can be addressed to [info@global-campaign.org](mailto:info@global-campaign.org).

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