

REACHING MEN, ENDING AIDS

THE MENHT NEWSLETTER, ISSUE NO. 1

August 2023



Dear friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the first issue of the Global Men & HIV newsletter!

Our aim is for this newsletter to be one more channel for learning and exchange on research, strategies, and programs related to reaching men with HIV testing, prevention, and treatment, alongside our periodic webinars and working group meetings.

We've been encouraged to see this community growing over time and to see increasing awareness of the importance of reaching and retaining men if we are to achieve and sustain epidemic control. Data continue to highlight that men living with HIV are less likely to know their status, initiate antiretroviral therapy (ART), remain engaged in care and be virally suppressed compared to women.

If you have ideas for helping this community to stay more engaged and connected, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Warm regards from the MENHT co-chairs,
 Wole Ameyan (WHO)
 Anna Grimsrud (IAS)
 Muhammad Jamil (WHO)
 Shawn Malone (PSI)
 Afsar Syed Mohammad (ILO)
 Lycias Zembe (UNAIDS)



What is MENHT?

For any of you who might be relatively new to the group, the Men & HIV Technical (MENHT) Working Group is a standing body of stakeholders and partners who seek to support global and country-level engagement and galvanize action to mitigate the gap in reaching men.

Our objectives are:

- To coordinate activities related to improving outcomes for men across the HIV cascade and to support advocacy efforts with global partners and key stakeholders
- To support development of programmatic resources for improving HIV services for men, including identification of promising interventions and review of technical guidance
- To identify, collect, and share policy guidance, technical briefs, best practices, case studies, lessons learned, tools, and other resources in support of the development and scaling of effective interventions
- Dissemination of WHO as well as other partner guidance, briefs and lessons learned and support scale up of effective interventions including providing technical assistance

Webinar recap: Men and PrEP

The scope of the MENHT includes organizing webinars and other fora to discuss interventions to improve HIV outcomes among men across the cascade. Our two most recent webinars focused on men and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Historically, PrEP programs have focussed on reaching key populations. But interest in PrEP for men is increasing, so much so that we needed more than one webinar to feature all of the programs and studies in this area. MENHT hosted a first webinar on men and PrEP in November 2022 and then a second one in April 2023.

Here are just a few highlights:



Lycias Zembe from UNAIDS discussed progress and challenges in scaling PrEP. In 2021, oral PrEP was dispensed to more than 1.6 million people worldwide. However, that number is still far short of the 2025 target of 10 million people.



Heather-Marie Schmidt presented updated guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) on PrEP, which now includes event-driven-PrEP as an option for all cisgender men, not only men who have sex with men. She also noted that men can start and stop PrEP using the same approach whether using daily or event-driven PrEP.



Lackeby Kawanga from JSI in Zambia outlined a strategy in Zambia for reaching more men with PrEP through their adolescent girls and young women (AGWY) partners, using an HIV prevention indexing (HPI) approach. Among men testing negative, 83% opted to start PrEP.



Shawn Malone from PSI reported on findings from PrEP research and piloting with men in South Africa, which found that PrEP was appealing to men with multiple HIV risk factors, with high persistence among a substantial proportion.



Danvic Rosadiño from LoveYourself in the Philippines talked about PrEP demand creation through various campaigns that have sought to educate but also to entertain and inspire.



Sheela Sheno from Yale University reported on a community-based PrEP delivery model targeting male bar patrons in rural South Africa, which was found to be particularly effective in reaching men who do not otherwise engage with the healthcare system.



Alexandra Kuo from the University of Washington, and Victor Omollo from Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) spoke about reaching men with pharmacy-based PrEP delivery in Kenya. They found that the model reached men who would benefit from PrEP and resulted in higher-than-average persistence.



James Ayieko from KEMRI presented on insights from the SEARCH study on men and PrEP/post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in rural East Africa. The study found high interest and uptake, with many men viewing both PrEP and PEP as desirable options for safely pursuing opportunities for sex.

If we've piqued your interest, the full set of presentations and webinar recordings are available online:
[MENHT webinar #5 - Men & PrEP pt.1](#)
[MENHT webinar #6 - Men & PrEP pt.2](#)

Recent publications

Strategies to improve antiretroviral therapy (ART) initiation and early engagement among men in sub-Saharan Africa: A scoping review of interventions in the era of universal treatment
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37132119/>

Understanding the Unique Barriers and Facilitators that Affect Men's Initiation and Retention in HIV Care: A Qualitative Study to Inform Interventions for Men Across the Treatment Cascade in Malawi
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36401144/>

Facility-based HIV self-testing strategies may substantially and cost-effectively increase the number of men and youth tested for HIV in Malawi: results from an individual-based mathematical model
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36251161/>

DID YOU KNOW:

Globally, men accounted for 53% of total new HIV infections among adults in 2022. Outside of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), men and boys accounted for 70% of HIV infections. In SSA, HIV cascade data shows that men are less likely than women to know their HIV status (87% for men vs 91% for women), initiate treatment (78% for men vs 85% for women), and reach viral suppression (72% for men vs 79% for women)

Wait! Before you go, challenge yourself to the MENHT quiz!

True or False: Event-driven PrEP is only recommended for men who have sex with men (MSM).

How many daily doses of oral PrEP are recommended for optimal HIV prevention in men?

Answers to quiz can be found in session materials of MENHT webinars 5 and 6 above

For any comments or questions on the above, please contact us at:
zembel@unaids.org and ameyanw@who.int

Kind regards,
The MENHT Steering Group

Geneva, 17 August 2023