

Innovative Strategies and Challenges in Addressing HIV Among Men: Insights and Future Directions

Date - Thursday, 25 July 2024

Session Format – Hybrid

Venue - Munich, Germany, Meeting Room 12

Time - 9-11 AM Geneva Time

Zoom link: For virtual participation (**including non-registered participants**)

<https://unaids.zoom.us/j/84506683020?pwd=RSQ2riZsHKoE0l1eHquW4seOUcRJKf.1>

Meeting ID: 845 0668 3020

Passcode: 571925

Background and introduction

The global HIV epidemic remains a formidable public health challenge, with men representing a significant yet often overlooked demographic in HIV prevention and treatment programs. Addressing these challenges require innovative and targeted approaches to effectively curb the spread of HIV among men.

In response to these issues, coordinated efforts have been made to engage men in HIV response initiatives. One notable initiative is the establishment of the Men and HIV Technical Working Group (MENHT), coordinated by WHO and UNAIDS. Despite these efforts, there remains a critical need to strengthen the actual adoption and implementation of these male-friendly interventions at the community, national, and global levels.

Additionally, several frameworks have been developed to guide work on men and HIV, including WHO's and UNAIDS's "Reaching Men with Person-Centered Health Services Through Evidence-Based Approaches and Interventions". These frameworks provide comprehensive strategies and recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of interventions targeting men.

The session titled "Innovative Strategies and Challenges in Addressing HIV Among Men: Insights and Future Directions," scheduled for the forthcoming IAS2024 Conference in Munich, aims to bring together leading experts, researchers, and practitioners in the field of HIV. The objective is to foster a comprehensive dialogue on the latest research findings, explore successful intervention strategies, and identify future directions for policy and practice.

This session will provide a platform to discuss contemporary issues on Men and HIV and highlight key interventions and approaches that have the potential to close the gap in HIV among men. Additionally, the session will address the multifaceted barriers that men face in accessing HIV services, presenting evidence-based solutions and highlighting examples of best practices from successful case studies worldwide.

Ultimately, this session seeks to catalyze a more effective and inclusive response to the HIV epidemic, emphasizing the critical need for targeted interventions and the integration of novel research into practical public health initiatives. It will build on the foundational work established by platforms like MENHT and the guiding frameworks, aiming to translate these efforts into actionable, on-the-ground impact.

Objective

This session aims to bring together leading experts, researchers, and practitioners to discuss innovative strategies, address unique challenges, review recent research, and identify future directions in the fight against HIV among men. The session will utilize a snow bowl format to facilitate an engaging and dynamic discussion, encouraging active participation and collaboration among attendees.

Session Structure

- Total Duration: 2 hours
- Format: Snow Bowl Session

Overview of Snow Bowl Format

The snow bowl format is an interactive discussion method where a small group of speakers discuss a topic in a central "bowl," while the audience listens. The moderator invites speakers, seated in the audience one at a time, to speak and build on the discussion until all speakers are present on the stage. Over time, audience members are invited to join the bowl and contribute to the discussion, ensuring a dynamic and inclusive exchange of ideas. This format encourages active participation, diverse perspectives, and deeper engagement with the topic.

Moderator

Wole Ameyan, Adolescent HIV; Men and HIV lead, WHO, Switzerland

Session panel and topics covered

Insights from recent research – why men

1. **Dr. Sikhulile Moyo**, Executive Committee Member of the Phylogenetics and Networks for Generalised Epidemics in Africa (PANGEA) 2 - HIV transmission dynamics data and implications for programmes for men and boys.

Exploration of Innovative strategies

Carlos Toledo,

1. **Dr. Carlos Toledo**, HIV Prevention Branch Chief in the Division of Global HIV and TB at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Headquarters, Atlanta, USA - VMMC programme evolution and what we can learn as an example of a successful intervention and its current challenges.

2. **Mr. Robert Serwanga**, Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, Buganda, Uganda - Engaging traditional leaders.
3. **Nelson Otwoma**, Executive Director, National Empowerment of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya (NAPHAK), Kenya - Engaging communities in intervention design and implementation.

Addressing unique challenges

1. **Kate Dovel**, Professor, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), USA, Partners in Hope, Malawi - Services and missed opportunities.
2. **Angeli Achrekar**, Deputy Executive Director for Programmes, UNAIDS, Switzerland – Addressing gender related issues in HIV among men and boys.
3. **Mr. Ontiretse Letlhare**, National Coordinator, National AIDS and Health Promotion Agency (NAHPA), Botswana - Providing leadership and coordination on Men and HIV work.

The role of advocacy and power of partnerships to advance the response among men and boys

1. **Mitchell Warren**, Executive Director, AVAC, USA - Role of advocacy.
2. **Emily Kainne Dokubo**, MD, MPH, Deputy Global AIDS Coordinator – Program Quality, U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Bureau of Global Health Security and Diplomacy (GHSD), U.S. Department of State, USA– The power of partnerships in addressing HIV among men and boys.

Future directions

1. **Yogan Pillay**, Director, HIV & Tuberculosis Delivery, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, South Africa - Funding perspectives.
2. **Angeli Achrekar**, Deputy Executive Director for Programmes, UNAIDS - Summary remarks and vision for the future.