

Project Brief: Integrating PrEP into Comprehensive Services for Adolescent Girls and Young Women

Full Title of Study/ Programme	Integrating PrEP into Comprehensive Services for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW)
Technical Focus Area/ Key Words	HIV prevention, adolescent girls, young women, PrEP, SRH, HIV Prevention, South Africa
Rationale	<p>AGYW in South Africa (aged between 15 and 24 years) have the highest HIV incidence, with young women in their early 20s having a four-fold burden compared to their male peers: approximately 1,745 new HIV infections occur in this cohort every week, and one third of teenage girls become pregnant before the age of 20.</p> <p>The project leverages off She Conquers and focuses on effective coordination and collaboration across the different channels (households/community structures, schools, technical and vocational education training (TVETs), public health facilities, and outreach services) informed by mapping of partners and services in the selected sub-districts.</p> <p>To facilitate large scale PrEP access by AGYW, a range of demand creation campaigns and messaging for different target audiences (AGYW in schools, rural versus urban settings, in tertiary education, in employment and unemployed) have been designed, implemented, and monitored.</p>
Primary Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase accessibility of PrEP for eligible adolescent population in the project implementation areas • Identify and develop effective delivery model and appropriate use of PrEP among adolescents is demonstrated • Provide evidence on the use of PrEP in adolescents is generated and disseminated
Primary Endpoint/ Outcome	The primary goal of the project is to contribute to a decrease in the incidence of HIV among AGYW (age 15-24) in South Africa. The project aims to strengthen demand, uptake and retention for comprehensive HIV prevention services including PrEP.
Secondary Endpoint/ Outcome	This project will also help to fill a gap in the global evidence base on the appropriate and most effective models for PrEP delivery, in the context of comprehensive health services (SRHR, combination prevention) to AGYW.
Study Design	<i>Conduct formative assessments to define effective adolescent and youth engagement strategies, communication approaches, and adherence strategies</i> - This will involve the design and conducting of formative research to understand the specific needs and

	<p>preferences of AGYW with a view to identify best practices in identifying optimal geographical settings, preferred communication approaches, the design and distribution of IEC and marketing materials, and approaches to adherence support.</p> <p>Monitor program performance - The District Health Information System (DHIS) currently contains few indicators specific to adolescents, particularly providing age disaggregated service utilization data, and PrEP indicators are not included on the National Indicator Data Set (NIDS). Wits RHI will participate in National M&E consultative forums to share lessons learned in monitoring and reporting of PrEP provision in a real-world setting to inform the development of PrEP specific indicators and the inclusion on the National Indicator Data Set. In addition to advocating for changes in the national health information management systems, site level monitoring will be done through use of web-based integrated data collection and management system.</p> <p>Implement innovative approaches for adherence monitoring and tracking - The project aims to use innovative and modern techniques to support adherence in PrEP users, including capacitating youth to use technology, exposure to new technology, and benefits for effectively using technology. Mobile support, such as a PrEP app will be used to push adherence support messages, elicit ongoing feedback, provide pill-taking reminders, and provide PrEP initiation support messages (managing side effects, healthy living, and combination prevention). Using technology in this manner will allow real-time monitoring and follow-up of PrEP users. In addition, the project will use biometric unique identifying systems to track AGYW service delivery.</p> <p>Conduct operational research to generate knowledge on the use of PrEP by eligible adolescents - Conducting operational research at defined time points will aid in generating evidence, which will be used to improve program implementation, identify and document best practices and areas for improvement, and support implementers and policy makers with information on implementation sustainability and points for future scale up. Operational research will be combined with enhanced M&E data collected at sites through electronic registers and other data sources such as mobile technology and specific quantitative and qualitative data collection. The project will gather data, in real-world settings (PHCs, university clinics, outreach services), on priority questions. Protocols will be developed to conduct this operations research in collaboration with NDOH and with inputs from the Steering Committee.</p>
Study population	Collaborate with learners, schools, communities (including parents), clients receiving PrEP, and health care clinics (health care providers) across 8 sites in South Africa.
Study/ Programme sites	KwaZulu Natal: eThekweni – Lancers Road Clinic KwaZulu Natal: eThekweni - Pinetown Clinic

	<p>Eastern Cape: King Dalindyebo – Ngangelizwe CHC Eastern Cape: Kind Dalindyebo – Stanford Terrace Eastern Cape: Nelson Mandela Bay – Motherwell CHC Eastern Cape: Nelson Mandela Bay – Ikamvelihle Clinic Gauteng: Tshwane – Maria Rantho CHC Gauteng: Tshwane – Phedisong 1 Clinic</p>
Study/ Programme duration	January 2018 – March 2021
Investigators and Project Contacts	<p>Principal Investigator - Dr. Saiqa Mullick (smullick@wrhi.ac.za) Co-Investigator – Ms. Vusile Butler (vbutler@wrhi.ac.za) Co-investigator – Ms. Letitia Greener (LGreener@wrhi.ac.za)</p>
Progress update	Implementation progress: 89% (5 887) of the programme target (6 640 AGYW initiations) achieved; 10 627 combined (AGYW and other ages groups)
Other Partners & Collaborators	<p>National Department of Health: Ms. Hasina Subedar(subedarh@health.gov.za or hasinasubedar@outlook.com)</p>
Donor	UNITAID
Briefing Owner and date of Briefing	<p>Vusile Butler 16 October 2020</p>