IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE AROUND DREAMS
Focus on male partners of AGYW

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Council’s IS portfolio

• **3** cross-cutting themes—focusing on unique features of DREAMS
  - Identifying, linking, and retaining vulnerable **AGYW** in programs
  - Introducing **PrEP** among AGYW
  - Reaching **male partners** of AGYW, and linking them to services

• **10** research activities across **7** DREAMS countries
Study selection

• Reflect PEPFAR country teams’ priorities for building evidence around DREAMS programming
• Fill global research gaps
• Reflect Council expertise in HIV, gender, and AGYW
• Focus on generating evidence for program and policy
Men’s engagement in HIV services: a “blind spot”\(^1,2\) in HIV prevention efforts

- Suboptimal uptake of HIV testing and (early) treatment among men
  - South Africa (2012): 62.2% of HIV-positive men (vs. 45% of women) were unaware of serostatus\(^3\)
  - Recent evidence from KZN: 80% of HIV-positive men ages 20–29 have detectable virus\(^4\)

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1. Cornell, McIntyre, Myer et al. (2011); 2. Shand, van den Berg, Peacock et al. (2014);
Study objectives

• **Objective 1**: Understand characteristics and perspectives of male partners of AGYW

• **Objective 2**: Assess successes and challenges of DREAMS strategies to link male partners of AGYW to HIV services
Study design—South Africa


FGDs w/DREAMS IPs, HIV service staff

Surveys w/men (n~800)
Hotspot venues
HIV service delivery sites

Qualitative cohort (n = 50)

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Study sites

- eThekwini district, KZN - Urban & peri-urban sites
  - Ward 71 in the South—Chartsworth, Shallcross and Burlington areas
  - Ward 15 in the West—Tshelimnyama
Building evidence to advance program implementation policy in South Africa
1. Hearing from male partners of AGYW

- Complementing widely collected perspectives of women with those of men\textsuperscript{1,2}

- Gaining critical new information:
  - Mpumalanga Community Mobilization trial\textsuperscript{3,4}:
    - High rates of men’s HIV risk behaviors
    - Risk behaviors were shaped by inequitable gender norms as well as structural vulnerabilities and stress
    - Most men were highly concerned about partner violence and alcohol abuse by men in their communities

\textsuperscript{1} Pulerwitz, Michaelis, Verma et al. (2012); \textsuperscript{2} Mathur, Higgins, Thummalachetty et al. (2016); \textsuperscript{3} Pettifor, Lippman, Selin et al. (2015); \textsuperscript{4} Gottert, Barrington, Pettifor et al. (2014)
What will we learn from male partners?

- Surveys at community venues & service delivery sites
  - Male partner characteristics, gender norms, stigma, vulnerabilities in informal settlements
  - Patterns of HIV service uptake, pre-post DREAMS
  - Men’s perspectives on programs & services
- Qualitative cohort of men
  - Understanding relationship types and motivations
  - Understanding how HIV services can respond to men’s needs and offer strategic support
2. Gaining early insight into Test and Start

- Key point in time; knowledge gaps
  - Test & Start policy—1 Sep 2016
  - Recent evidence from TasP trial in KZN showed low linkage to care\(^1\)
  - Little research on community awareness and perceptions of TasP\(^2\)
    - Also in Mpumalanga, qualitative research demonstrated low community awareness of TasP, but positive perceptions and influence on service uptake\(^3\)

1. Iwuji, Orne-Gliemann, Balestre et al. (2016); 2. Young & McDaid (2014)
3. Mooney, Gottert, Lippman et al. (2016)
What are we doing to gain early insight into Test and Start?

- Unpacking via quantitative and qualitative methods
  - Extent of delays in HIV testing, care and treatment uptake
  - Reasons for these delays
  - TasP awareness and perceptions
  - Provider perceptions of Test and Start rollout
3. Learning from IP experiences

• Range of DREAMS strategies to engage male partners in HIV services
  – How to frame learnings?

• Applying principles from related Council TA for DREAMS to strengthen programming for AGYW¹:
  – “Intentional design”
  – Understanding layering of and linkages between programs
  – “Learning networks” of IPs & CBOs

1. Population Council (2016) http://www.popcouncil.org/girl-centered-program-resources/
How are we learning from implementing partner experiences?

- Ongoing documentation of evolving, on the ground processes and realities
- Mapping of HIV services and program coordination
- Contributing to learning networks by sharing our Phase I results mid-2017
Takeaway messages and Recommendations

• Our DREAMS implementation science (IS) research will provide core insights into how to refine the ongoing intervention and will inform future programs and policies.

• Don’t forget the men. Understanding male perspectives and experiences is critical to reducing HIV vulnerability of both men and their partners.

• In our DREAMS research with male partners of AGYW, we are focusing on hearing directly from men about relationship dynamics and HIV service use, gaining early insight into successes and challenges of Test and Start rollout, and learning from DREAMS implementing partner experiences.
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References


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