Strategies to identify HIV-infected children and adolescents

Lessons from the Paediatric and Adolescent Scale-up Project (PASP), Johannesburg, South Africa

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2nd November, 2017
• South Africa has made remarkable progress to scale-up PMTCT services
• Despite this, older children and adolescents still lack access to diagnosis and treatment
• Beyond PMTCT there limited entry points for children
• Identifying and diagnosing children as HIV-infected is the first step in the continuum of paediatric care and treatment

UNAIDS, 2016
Finding HIV+ positive children is harder

CHAI, 2016, UNAIDS, 2017
Barriers to HIV testing for infants and children

- Few testing opportunities outside of PMTCT
- Patient level barriers
- Health care workers barriers
- Health care system barriers

JIAS, 2016; Ahmed et al, 2013
• “Unfinished business” initiative using a QI approach
• To accelerate 90-90-90 goals for HIV-positive children and adolescent
• Multi-partner collaborative led by the Department of Health
• PASP is the Johannesburg collaboration supported by Wits RHI, Anova Health Institute, Right to Care and HIVSA
• The funding supports a dedicated team including, clinicians QI advisors, psychosocial, linkage officers, M&E
• Focuses on high volume facilities in the seven sub-districts
PASP Project objectives

1. Improve earlier diagnosis of children and adolescents with HIV by increasing testing, screening, case-finding and linkages to treatment/support.

2. Increase access to quality HIV treatment for children and adolescents.
Overview of HIV Testing Strategies

- Children aged 18 months-19 years, were offered facility or community-based PICT
  - 57 PASP supported sites in the City of Johannesburg between June 2016 and July 2017.

- Facility testing strategies
  - Child health sites
  - Family planning
  - Adolescent and youth friendly services
  - Testing children of adult HIV index cases

- Community strategies
  - CBOs
  - OVCY sites
  - Community testing events
## Key Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Facility-based testing n= 18,081</th>
<th>Community-based HIV-testing n=17,381</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tested n (%)</td>
<td>HIV+ yield n, (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family planning (13-19 years)</td>
<td>896 (5%)</td>
<td>95 (10.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index case testing (18 months - 19 years)</td>
<td>1109 (6.1%)</td>
<td>103 (9.3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AYFS (15-19 years)</td>
<td>13669 (75.6)</td>
<td>917 (6.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child health (18 month-9 years)</td>
<td>2344 (13%)</td>
<td>105 (4.5)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Facility Based Testing**

- **n=18,018**
- Tested (n): 10,600
- Yield (%): 4.5

**Community Based Testing**

- **n=17,381**
- Tested (n): 11,500
- Yield (%): 1.1

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**Family planning**

- Tested (n): 1,000
- Yield (%): 0

**Index case testing**

- Tested (n): 1,500
- Yield (%): 1.9

**AYFS**

- Tested (n): 3,000
- Yield (%): 1.1

**Child health**

- Tested (n): 4,000
- Yield (%): 0

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**CBO Testing**

- Tested (n): 1,500
- Yield (%): 1

**OVCPY**

- Tested (n): 1,000
- Yield (%): 0.5

**Community events**

- Tested (n): 500
- Yield (%): 1.5

**Other**

- Tested (n): 50
- Yield (%): 0
Case finding Through Adult Index Clients

- Adult Index Clients: 729
- Children identified for testing: 1028
- Index patients contacted: 827
- Received HIV test: 317
- HIV negative: 284
- HIV positive: 33
Scalability

- HIV case finding particularly at health facilities is a feasible and effective way of identifying HIV-infected older children and adolescents in high HIV prevalence setting.
- However, scale-up requires dedicated staff to drive testing strategies.
Conclusions and Recommendations

- Targeted testing improves testing opportunities beyond PMTCT
- Higher HIV positivity yield at facilities vs community based testing
- Targeted testing at FP, AYFS and child health entry points are simple, feasible and effective strategies
- Focused strategies at community sites could improve case finding.
- Index case finding is more complex but allows for testing of at risk children
- Dedicated staff are needed in identifying HIV-infected children and adolescents
Acknowledgements

• USAID and ELMA philanthropies
• PASP teams Wits RHI, Anova Health Institute, Right to Care, HIVSA and DoH
• Dr Jackie Dunlop
• Dr Carol Tait
• Dr Lee Fairlie
• Mr Andrew Munemeris
• Ms Anne Magege
• Dr Nombuso Madonsela