HIV Research For Prevention (HIV R4P), The First Global Scientific Conference Dedicated Exclusively To Biomedical HIV Prevention, Opens 28 October In Cape Town, South Africa

Hundreds of Conference Presentations Will Review the Latest Research on Emerging and Innovative Methods to Reverse the Global AIDS Epidemic

“This premier HIV R4P meeting ushers in a new era in HIV prevention science.”
– Helen Rees, executive director, Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute (Cape Town, South Africa) – Progress in reducing HIV infections worldwide, advances in the development of safer and more effective prevention options – including microbicides, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and vaccines – and the challenge of reaching the people most in need of new prevention approaches top the agenda at HIV Research for Prevention (HIV R4P). The new biennial conference is the first global scientific meeting focused exclusively on the challenging and fast-growing field of biomedical HIV prevention research.

Approximately 1,300 researchers, clinicians, private sector leaders, advocates, policy makers and public health experts from around will participate in the four-day conference, opening 28 October at the Cape Town International Conference Centre.

“This premier HIV R4P meeting takes place at a critical moment in the AIDS epidemic and ushers in a new era in HIV prevention science,” said Helen Rees, founder and executive director of the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute of the University of the Witwatersrand and a co-chair of HIV R4P. “While previous meetings focused on individual prevention methods, R4P builds on a growing consensus that combination approaches will be most effective in driving down the global epidemic. Understanding, analyzing and debating the crosscutting issues that impact all HIV prevention research will be a cornerstone of HIV R4P.”

The HIV R4P scientific program includes four days of plenary sessions; more than 720 new research studies presented in more than 50 abstract and poster sessions; networking lunches; symposia, roundtables; and pre- and post-conference satellite sessions sponsored by research- and community-based organizations from around the world. The HIV R4P daily press conference schedule is here.

Among the cutting edge topics on the conference agenda are:

- the prospects for new, long-lasting prevention options;
- the latest HIV antibody discoveries and their implications for vaccine development;
- research into microbicides and other female-controlled prevention methods;
- the use of antiretroviral therapy to reduce HIV infection and transmission
- the potential for multipurpose prevention technologies, which could block HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, or prevent pregnancy, simultaneously; and
- the behavioral and adherence challenges of prevention.
HIV R4P will also provide a critically-important forum for scientific and community leaders to review crosscutting issues in HIV prevention, including the challenges that stigma, discrimination and misinformation add to prevention efforts; and strategize about how to get effective prevention to those who need it most. Session formats have been designed to promote interaction, discussion and debate between participants, and every session at HIV R4P will include opportunities for Q&A with the presenters.

“The search for effective biomedical HIV prevention options has progressed further and faster in the last few years than at any time since the epidemic began,” said Robin Shattock, professor of Mucosal Infection and Immunity at Imperial College, London and HIV R4P co-chair. “Scientific advances only improve health when they are implemented, however. Understanding how to make new prevention tools available to those who need them most, and fully funding and supporting those efforts, will be another key focus of the participants at HIV R4P.”

Featured speakers at HIV R4P will include:

- Fareed Abdullah, South African National AIDS Council
- Jared Baeten, University of Washington, US
- Chris Beyrer, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, US
- Anthony Fauci, U.S. National Institutes of Health, US (by video)
- Glenda Gray, South African Medical Research Council, Perinatal HIV Research Unit
- Pontiano Kaleebu and Anatoli Kamali, Medical Research Council/UVRI Uganda Research Unit on AIDS, Uganda
- Lynn Morris, National Institute for Communicable Diseases of the NHLS, South Africa
- Naledi Pandor, Minister of Science and Technology, South Africa
- Helen Rees, Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, South Africa

African research and advocacy will be a cornerstone of the HIV R4P agenda. Many of the most important clinical trials and studies that have advanced the global AIDS response have been hosted, supported, designed and led in Africa. To facilitate the full representation of global expertise at the meeting, 300 full and partial scholarships have been granted to leading researchers and advocates who otherwise would be unable to attend the conference.

“South Africa was selected to host the first HIV R4P conference because of the nation’s leadership in HIV prevention research, its innovative and collaborative approaches to expanding access to effective prevention approaches and its national commitment to reducing its epidemic,” said Glenda Gray, president of the South African Medical Research Council. “South Africa is home to the largest population of people living with HIV in the world. What really distinguishes South Africa, however, are the strides the nation is making against the epidemic – progress that will be on display when HIV R4P convenes in Cape Town.”

HIV R4P will also feature the presentation of the First Desmond Tutu Award for HIV Prevention Research and Human Rights. The award will be presented to an individual or research organization that has worked in an outstanding manner to advance both HIV prevention research and the human rights of people affected by HIV.

On-site media registration is available for South Africa-based journalists. All R4P plenary, symposia, roundtables and oral abstract sessions will be available via webcast on hivr4p.org within 24 hours of conference presentation. News from HIV R4P will also be available through the HIV R4P Facebook page and the Twitter hashtag, #HIVR4P.
HIV R4P 2014 is chaired by five of the world’s leading experts in HIV prevention research: Sharon Hillier, University of Pittsburgh, USA; Eric Hunter, Emory University, Atlanta, USA; Anatoli Kamali, Medical Research Council/UVRI Uganda Research Unit on AIDS, Entebbe, Uganda; Helen Rees, Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute (WRHI), Johannesburg, South Africa; and Robin Shattock, Imperial College, London, UK.

About HIV R4P
HIV R4P is the world’s first and only scientific meeting dedicated exclusively to biomedical HIV prevention research. Through both abstract and non-abstract driven sessions, the conference will support cross-fertilization between research on HIV vaccines, microbicides, PrEP, treatment as prevention and other biomedical prevention approaches, while also providing a venue to discuss the research findings, questions and priorities that are specific to advancing each modality. Conference partners include the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center; amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research; the French National Agency for Research on AIDS and Viral Hepatitis (ANRS); the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; the Government of Canada; CONRAD; Crucell; the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation; Gilead Sciences; GlaxoSmithKline; the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative; the International Partnership for Microbicides; the Medical Research Council; the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the NIH; the NIH Office of AIDS Research; PEPFAR; Sanofi Pasteur; UNAIDS; USAID; ViiV Healthcare; and the Wellcome Trust. Significant in-kind support was provided by AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention; Emory University; Imperial College, London; Medical Research Council/UVRI Uganda Research Unit on AIDS; University of Pittsburgh and the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute of the University of the Witwatersrand.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of HIV R4P partners.

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