Advancing STI control and prevention through health promotion: new evidence-based behaviour interventions

Overall goal:
To validate targeted behaviour interventions to prevent STI/HIV in general populations, key populations (MSM, SW, STI clinic attendees), and adolescents/young people as part of combination prevention strategy.

Background:
Behaviour interventions have consistently been seen as an essential part of comprehensive STI/HIV prevention. The current understanding of prevention as a combination approach is that it must include structural changes, such as access to commodities (condoms, information) and services (testing, treatment and care), within a human rights framework with an emphasis on the importance of promoting relevant behaviour interventions. Throughout the last decade some substantial research has been undertaken to develop evidence-based behaviour interventions that contribute to health outcomes from an STI/HIV-safer behaviour perspective (e.g. delay in sexual debut, consistent condom use, partner reduction strategy, HIV/STI testing) as well as promotion of sexual well-being through increasing self-esteem, self-regulation and a positive attitude towards one’s own and other’s sexuality.

However most of the studies have been conducted in the northern hemisphere and therefore results cannot be directly replicated in other countries. As sexual behaviour is very much driven by local norms, traditions and culture the behaviour interventions must be adapted to local contexts.

Therefore it would be timely to establish the validity of specific behaviour interventions proven in their effectiveness in high-income settings, for varied population needs in low- and middle-income settings. It will contribute to the current efforts to promote combination prevention strategy as a means to reduce STI/HIV burden in a long-term perspective, particularly among key populations and adolescents and young people.

WHO Regions: European region and Region of the Americas

Targeted behaviour interventions to prevent STI/HIV and unintended pregnancy in general populations, key and vulnerable populations.

National research centres in Western and Eastern European regions and Region of the Americas.

HRP and international development foundations.

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