Implementation Research to Eliminate Mother-to-Child Transmission (EMTCT) of HIV and Syphilis

**Objectives and Background**

Global and regional initiatives have been launched for dual elimination of mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of HIV and syphilis. As one of the important components in the initiatives, early detection and timely intervention of pregnant women infected with HIV and/or syphilis is critical. At least three manufacturers have recently developed dual HIV/syphilis rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) which hold the potential to improve access and quality of HIV and syphilis testing in settings such as antenatal care.

Therefore, WHO has initiated a package of research to evaluate the potential utility of these dual HIV/syphilis RDTs. Laboratory evaluations of all three tests were completed in September 2014 in China and Nigeria. An evaluation comparing the field performance of two of the new tests is ongoing in Zambia. Introduction studies to assess the impact on testing and treatment uptake, acceptability, and efficiencies associated with a dual test are underway in China and Colombia, and a protocol for a similar study is under ethical review for Nigeria. WHO prequalification is also conducting evaluation of several candidate dual HIV/syphilis RDTs.

In addition, WHO is collaborating with Tulane University to conduct a multi-cluster combination intervention trial in Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo to assess the potential impact of enhanced community and provider interventions on syphilis testing and treatment rates in antenatal care.

It is hoped that the experience learned from these studies can be used to guide future WHO guidelines processes.

**Geographic location**

China, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Zambia

**Main deliverables**

Peer-reviewed publications on laboratory performance, field performance, and the operational implications of use of dual HIV/syphilis RDTs.

**Partners**

PATH, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, US CDC, China National STD Center, University of Colombia, CIDRZ

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