

Press Release



Launch of the MOBILE MEN Programme: Pioneering HIV Prevention for Mobile Men in Sub-Saharan Africa

South Africa and Uganda – 20. AUGUST 2024 - *The Desmond Tutu Health Foundation (DTHF), Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI) and Medical Research Council/Uganda Virus Research Institute are excited to announce the enrollment of their first study participants in the groundbreaking MOBILE MEN Programme.*

MOBILE MEN is a pioneering initiative aimed at informing the implementation of both oral and long-acting HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for mobile men in Sub-Saharan Africa. This innovative study will focus on the “on demand” regimen for oral PrEP and the use of CAB-LA (long-acting injectable PrEP), marking the first male-only study of its kind in the region.



Men who are mobile for work are at high risk for HIV and have traditionally been underrepresented in PrEP trials. This study aims to address this gap by providing critical data on the effectiveness and implementation of PrEP among mobile men in Sub-Saharan Africa. The results of this study will guide the rollout of both

oral and injectable PrEP in this population, ultimately contributing to the reduction of HIV incidence in the region.

The MOBILE MEN Programme is the first male-only study of on demand PrEP and CAB-LA in Sub-Saharan Africa and focuses on men who travel for work such as fishermen in Uganda and truck drivers, farm workers, and men seeking employment in South Africa. On demand oral PrEP is an evidence-based strategy approved for men only whereby 2 oral PrEP pills are taken before potential sexual exposure to HIV, one a day later and one a day after that – the so called 2+1+1 regimen.

The MOBILE MEN programme is a Phase 3b trial where men are randomly assigned to taking either oral PrEP or receiving CAB-LA during a nine-month period. Thereafter, participants have the option to remain on or switch the PrEP product and will be monitored for another nine months. This study, therefore, aims to compare how men adopt (choose and use) oral versus injectable PrEP and to understand the reach and barriers to PrEP.

“By examining adoption patterns, we also aim to evaluate the feasibility and service needs and assess the cost effectiveness of offering both products in the public health sector – providing insights for real-world roll-out. This is especially important given the South African government’s recent announcement about the roll-out of CAB-LA to public health facilities before the end of 2024,” said Maryam Shahmanesh from AHRI.



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Africa Health Research Institute’s vision is optimal health and well-being of under-resourced populations. AHRI is an independent, transdisciplinary scientific research institute based across two campuses in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. AHRI’s research combines population, basic & translational, social, and clinical sciences to understand and intervene in the health and well-being of South African communities. AHRI works in partnership with local communities and South African and international academic, governmental and other policy stakeholders. The institute prioritises the training of the next generation of African scientists.

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Desmond Tutu Health Foundation (DTHF) is an accredited, peer-reviewed research non-profit organization based in Cape Town, committed to the pursuit of excellence in research, treatment, training and prevention of HIV and related infections in Southern Africa. The core competencies and ongoing initiation and completion of research-guided interventions have creatively and responsibly sought to lessen the burden and impact of HIV on individuals and families most vulnerable to HIV and TB, while building sustainable research capacity and human capital to see ongoing research and outcomes in this critical public health field. Situated within the Desmond Tutu HIV Centre (DTHC), the foundation is an accredited research group within the University of Cape Town. DTHF is a respected partner of the Provincial and National Health Services of the South African government. <https://desmondtutuhealthfoundation.org.za/>

Medical Research Council/Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI)’s vision is to act as a world class centre of excellence in health research. UVRI engages in health research pertaining to human infections and disease processes associated with or linked to viral aetiology and provides expert advice, enables partnerships and communication and serves as a center for training and education. UVRI’s mission is to conduct scientific investigations on diseases, contribute to knowledge, policy and practice and engage in capacity building. <https://www.uvri.go.ug/>