



60percent

Gender-Affirming Care in Persons Living with HIV



ContagionLive | 19 September 2022

Jenna Januszka, Renata Smith and Melissa Badowski

Gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) therapy consists of administration of exogenous hormones and suppression of endogenous hormone production, with the goal of obtaining characteristics more congruent with an individual's gender identity. Here is a review of these therapies and consideration for PrEP and the risks associated with HIV in this diverse population. Gender-affirming care consists of comprehensive services including medical, surgical, mental health, and social services to support and affirm an individual's gender identity. Gender identity refers to a person's individual experience of gender. A transgender, gender nonconforming, gender nonbinary, or genderqueer person's gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. In 2019, approximately 1 million individuals living in the United States identified as transgender or gender nonconforming. Transgender individuals made up approximately 2% of all new HIV diagnoses that year. Transgender persons are at high risk for acquiring HIV, with approximately 14% of trans women and 3% of trans men already living with HIV and even higher rates among racial minority transgender persons. Transgender individuals may prioritize gender-affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) over antiretroviral therapy (ART) if they perceive ART to decrease efficacy of GAHT. Previous literature suggests provision of gender-affirming care to persons living with HIV improves quality of life as well as engagement and retention in care.

Vaginismus, endometriosis: 'Women's health continues to be downplayed', says doctor



News24 | 16 September 2022

Good sexual and reproductive health is key to a woman's general health and well-being, yet women often shy away from these discussions. One intimate health expert urges women to talk openly about their sexual health. Dr Shirin Lakhani, a UK-based GP and owner of Elite Aesthetics, told Cover Media that

women should feel free to bring up topics they are concerned about, whether it's with their doctor or a loved one. "Women's health continues to be downplayed, especially around sexual health, and women often go incorrectly treated," she says, adding: "Sexual health-related issues are wide-ranging and encompass everything from sexual dysfunction, sexual expression, and also pleasure."

Teaming up to end teenage pregnancies in SADC



Health-E News | 16 September 2022

With at least 13% of women in developing countries bearing children while they are still kids themselves, four global health giants have joined forces to end this scourge of teenage pregnancies. To counter this, the 2gether4SRHR programme, which combines the efforts of UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO), hosted a dialogue earlier this week. The discussion titled 'Building back better' discussed high-impact practices to prevent pregnancies among teenagers in the Southern African Development Community region (SADC). Together, they aim to improve the sexual and reproductive health and the rights of all people, especially adolescent girls and young people.

UNAIDS urges donors to fully fund the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to get the HIV response back on track



UNAIDS | 18 September 2022

UNAIDS is calling on countries and donors to fully fund the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by pledging a total of at least US\$18 billion at the Seventh Global Fund Replenishment

Conference hosted by President Biden in New York this week. Speaking at the opening, on behalf of the United Nations family, the Executive Director of UNAIDS Winnie Byanyima said, “Millions of lives are at stake, along with the health of us all. A successful replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is essential to get the world on track to end three of today's most devastating epidemics and instill resilience into national health systems capable of withstanding tomorrow's shocks.”

PrEParing for the next chapter of HIV prevention in Myanmar



UNAIDS | 19 September 2022

Two young men are sitting on a couch scrolling on their phones when May Oo, a famous makeup artist and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) activist in Myanmar, joins them wearing a face mask and carrying a bag of drinks. He announces that a friend who works at an HIV clinic in Yangon told him that pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is now available in Myanmar. As one friend is unaware of PrEP, May Oo shares his knowledge, also informing anyone else who would like to listen in. This scene, from a video shared on the Facebook pages of implementing partners of the USAID HIV/AIDS Flagship (UHF) Project, is one of several to raise awareness and demand PrEP as a prevention tool for men who have sex with men and transgender women in Myanmar. In these videos by celebrated members of the LGBTQ community and other educational posts, questions covered include what PrEP is, why it should be taken, and where to get it. As May Oo's friend in the video puts it, 'PrEP is a drug that can prevent HIV.'

School saves lives: World leaders back a courageous goal, “Education Plus”, to prevent new HIV infections through education and empowerment



At the Transforming Education Summit in New York it was announced that 12 African countries* have committed to *Education Plus*, a bold initiative to prevent HIV infections through free universal, quality secondary education for all girls and boys in Africa, reinforced through comprehensive empowerment programmes. Speaking on the Leaders Day of the Summit on behalf of the Education Plus movement, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Winnie Byanyima said, “School saves lives. We are coming together to champion the right for a girl to be in a classroom and in a safe classroom. Keeping girls in school helps ensure their rights and prevents HIV. We know that if a girl completes secondary education, the risk of infection reduces by 50%. That’s why we’ve teamed up with UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, with governments and with civil society, to champion the education and empowerment of adolescent girls in Africa to stop new HIV infections.” Through Education Plus, champion countries across Africa are bringing sectors together to fight inequalities by ensuring access to and completion of secondary school, protecting girls and young women from HIV infection, sexual violence, teenage pregnancies and early marriages, and creating opportunities for access to education, health, and jobs.

'Out of control': rise in STDs, including 26% syphilis spike, sparks US alarm



The Guardian | 20 September 2022

Sharply rising cases of some sexually transmitted diseases, including a 26% rise in new syphilis infections reported last year, are prompting US health officials to call for new prevention and treatment efforts. “It is imperative that we ... work to rebuild, innovate, and expand (STD) prevention in the US,” said Leandro Mena of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in a speech on Monday at a medical conference on sexually transmitted diseases. Infections rates for some STDs, including gonorrhoea and syphilis, have been rising for years. Last year the rate of syphilis cases reached its highest since 1991 and the total number of cases hit its highest since 1948. HIV cases are also on the rise, up 16% last year.

Is the future of South Africa's tuberculosis (TB) plans locked up in the mysterious minds of teens?



Mail & Guardian | 20 September 2022

Fourteen months, seven facilities (in the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal), two types of treatment (hundreds of pills), six months in hospital and two missed years of school. That's what it took for Akona Tshwete*, 13, to recover from tuberculosis (TB), according to his doctor, Juli Switala. Switala is a paediatrician at the health organisation, The Aurum Institute, and was speaking at last week's seventh South African TB conference in Durban. The situation could have been avoided, says Switala — if Tshwete had access to a treatment programme geared towards his and other teens' specific needs. TB treatment can be tough to take. For teens of up to 16, drug courses are between four and six months, depending on the severity of their TB, according to World Health Organisation guidelines issued in March.



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