

# Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

## BACKGROUND

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a medication to prevent HIV infection in HIV-negative people. PrEP can stop HIV from taking hold and spreading throughout the body, and when taken daily, oral PrEP is highly effective for preventing HIV from sex or injection drug use. Additionally, expectant mothers who are HIV-negative can take PrEP to prevent infection, and thus prevent mother-to-child transmission (MTCT), during the critical periods of pregnancy and breastfeeding.<sup>1</sup> PrEP and the prevention of MTCT greatly contribute to the UNAIDS “fast-track” targets for prevention, which aims to reduce the number of new HIV infections in 2030 to fewer than 200,000.<sup>2</sup>



## Recommendations and Success Rates

- Oral PrEP can reduce the risk of HIV infection from sex by 99% when taken daily. Among people who inject drugs, PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV by at least 74% when taken daily.<sup>3</sup>
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends PrEP as part of a comprehensive prevention program and an additional prevention choice for people who have a substantial risk of HIV infection.<sup>1</sup>
- The rate of MTCT of HIV can be reduced to below 5% with PrEP intervention during pregnancy and breastfeeding.<sup>4</sup>

## I-TECH CAPACITY

Despite scale-up of HIV testing and treatment in Africa, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), as well as individuals in sero-discordant relationships, have high incidence of HIV.<sup>5</sup> I-TECH supports PrEP delivery at HIV care and treatment clinics for partners of individuals receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART). In addition, I-TECH’s work in PrEP coincides with its efforts to support programs that provide for the physical and mental health of AGYW.

## Direct Service Delivery

I-TECH supports direct service delivery of oral PrEP for AGYW in **Namibia** through community-based delivery approaches. Since early 2018,



*DREAMS mentors in Namibia participate in an I-TECH-hosted workshop that covers information on PrEP education, counseling, and initiation.*

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (WHO). WHO expands recommendation on oral pre-exposure prophylaxis of HIV infection (PrEP). Policy Brief. November 2015.

<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS. Understanding Fast-Track: Accelerating Action to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030. June 2015.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. PrEP. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep/index.html> (Accessed December 17, 2019.)

<sup>4</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO). Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV. <https://www.who.int/hiv/topics/mtct/en/> (Accessed November 12, 2019.)

<sup>5</sup> Celum CL, et al. HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis for adolescent girls and young women in Africa: from efficacy trials to delivery. J Int AIDS Soc. 2019 Jul; 22(Suppl Suppl 4): e25298.

PrEP education, counseling, and initiation services have been provided to AGYW aged 15-24 as part of the community-based [DREAMS service package](#). Community-based services are provided at safe spaces as well as tertiary institutions. I-TECH also provides community-based PrEP monitoring and follow-up services. From early 2018 through May 2019, more than 2,290 adolescent girls and young women have been started on PrEP across the two DREAMS regions.

### Demand Creation

In **Namibia**, I-TECH supports awareness and demand creation through the development and distribution of fliers and informational sheets on PrEP for AGYW and their key influencers (e.g., parents, community, peers). Additionally, I-TECH works to incorporate PrEP education into existing HIV prevention education programs, curricula, and health talks. I-TECH has also been working in **Zimbabwe** to build demand and client literacy for PrEP among AGYW.

### Technical Assistance

I-TECH in **Namibia** provides technical assistance for facility-based delivery of PrEP for priority populations including AGYW, serodiscordant partners, and pregnant and breastfeeding women. Since 2017, I-TECH has also supported PrEP implementation at regional and national levels in Namibia to facilitate site-level success. Site-level technical assistance includes the provision of on-site training and mentoring on PrEP guidelines, clinical service delivery, and monitoring and evaluation. In addition to provision of PrEP within the ART clinic, site-level technical assistance focuses on supporting successful integration of PrEP into antenatal care, family planning services, and primary health care services.

I-TECH has worked closely with Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) and other partners to develop and implement national PrEP guidelines, national PrEP implementation standard operating procedures, national M&E and clinical tools, and a national PrEP training curriculum. I-TECH hosted a PrEP study tour to Kenya with key MoHSS regional and national staff and actively participants in the PrEP technical working group.

### Training & Workshops

I-TECH uses blended learning models and approaches in **Ukraine** to educate clinicians, health care providers, and staff on the use of PrEP. In **Namibia**, I-TECH has worked closely with the MoHSS and other local partners to develop training curriculum for rapid scale-up of PrEP training.

### Implementation Science

I-TECH faculty and staff are engaged in implementation research at the International Clinical Research Center (ICRC) at the University of Washington to identify effective strategies for PrEP provision in **Namibia**, **Kenya**, and **South Africa**. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, this research seeks answers to questions about which service delivery models work best for whom and in what contexts. I-TECH is currently conducting implementation research in **Namibia** to understand the key ingredients of its highly successful program to provide PrEP to AGYW.



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