

Presentation at the 2018 update on HIV Prevention and Treatment Policies, Guidelines and Research Focus in Nigeria



National HIV Research Policy - Focus & Opportunities For Research Projects



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Background

- With an estimated 3.2 million people infected with HIV, Nigeria has the second largest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world
- Facing the triple threat of high HIV burden, low treatment coverage, and slow decline in new HIV infections.
- Nigeria has a mixed epidemic, with two major transmission streams:
 - a high and sustained transmissions in key populations,
 - a declining transmission in the general population.



Background...2

- Over 90% of PLHIV in Nigeria are 15 years or older and about 60% of them are females
 - 180,000 people die annually from AIDS related illnesses
 - 180,000 children 17 years or younger are currently orphaned by AIDS
- 1,050,000 infected persons were initiated on ART
- Predominant mode of HIV transmission in Nigeria is heterosexual sex; which accounts for 42% of new infections.



Background...3

- Drivers of the epidemic include low personal risk perception, multiple concurrent sexual partnerships, transactional and intergenerational sex, ineffective and inefficient services for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and inadequate access to and poor quality of healthcare services.
- Key affected populations are significant drivers of the epidemic in Nigeria. HIV prevalence among female sex workers (FSW) and their clients remains disproportionately high despite decades of preventional activities .



Background...4

- HIV prevalence among FSW is 7 to 10-fold higher than the general population and a major contributor to 40% of new HIV transmission in Nigeria
- Prevalence among MSM was as high as 17.2% and 4.2% among IDU
- Transfusion of unsafe blood and mother to child transmission accounts for over 10% of new HIV infections in Nigeria .
- Maiden National HIV and AIDS research agenda expired in 2015, necessitating its revision and development of the 2018-2022 version.



Justification for the Agenda

- Nature of HIV/AIDS transmission is dynamic.
 - Population of Nigeria is dynamic, diverse and continuously adjusting to a dynamic global economy.
- Focus of donors, research institutions and researchers are diverse, which influences national, local and institutional response to the HIV/AIDS response.
- Align needs with interests and bring into focus the nation's priorities and the dynamism of the various factors that influence HIV/AIDS transmission within the community



Justification Agenda

- Determine direction of response and the strategy for programme implementation.
- Guide scholars, research institutions, funding agencies, and others in the national response to conduct appropriate research.
- Outline the structures for the coordination of research needs, activities, use of research and the mechanism for dissemination, the rules and procedures for allocating resources and monitoring the utilization of research outcomes for maximum benefits.



Goal of the HIV Research Agenda 2018-22

- To develop key research priorities for providing viable knowledge and understanding of effective ways to further control the country's HIV epidemic for evidence based policy and practice.
 - Provides a guide for implementation and coordination of research activities to accomplish appreciable reduction of new HIV infections, and improve overall health of PLHIV.



Specific Objectives of the HIV Research Agenda 2018-22

- Develop national HIV and AIDS research priorities to generate knowledge feasible to significantly reduce number of persons infected with HIV, improve access to treatment and care of persons living with HIV, and foster their overall health and well-being.
- Establish framework to Improve implementation and coordination of research priorities and other related activities among various stakeholders.
- Define a mechanism to guide resource mobilization and allocation.



Implementation and Coordination Process

- Leadership by NACA
 - National Steering Committee for the Research Agenda
 - National HIV and AIDS Research Reference Group (NHARRG)
 - Resource Mobilization
 - Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC)
 - Community Advisory Mechanism



National Research Priorities/Focus

- Classified under three thematic areas :
 - Prevention of HIV among General and Key Populations, and Elimination of Mother-To-Child Transmission (eMTCT)
 - Treatment, Care, Support and Adherence
 - Cross-cutting issues/programme enablers





Prevention of HIV among General and Key Populations, and Elimination of Mother-To-Child Transmission (eMTCT)

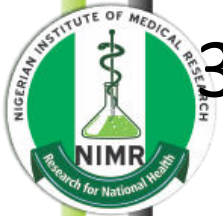


1. Optimization of eMTCT services uptake in Nigeria
HIV and adolescence
2. Effective strategies for reaching IDPs with
HIV/AIDS prevention services
3. HIV drug resistance and HIV transmission in
Nigeria
4. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
5. HIV Self testing
6. Key population (MSM, FSW, PWID, LGBTs)
7. Stigma and discrimination
8. Gender dynamics, GBV
9. HIV prevention technologies (Vaccine and
microbicide)



Treatment, Care, Support and Adherence

1. Operational research on HIV treatment and care support services for adolescents and young persons
2. Evaluating the impact of “Test and Start” Strategy on HIV Management.
3. Predictors of poor treatment outcomes – HIV ARVs, adherence, patient clinician relationship, capacity and attitude of HCWs, Appropriate
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5. Research on the cost benefit analysis of different approaches to viral load testing
6. Role of point of care VL and TB detection to improve HIV prevention, care and treatment uptake in rural Nigeria
7. Assessment of barriers and facilitators of effective linkage of HIV positive patients to ART service delivery point.
8. Research on Pharmacovigilance: its awareness, reportage in HIV Treatment and drug toxicity



8. Conduct of Early Warning Indicator Survey (EWI) for HIV drug resistance
9. Ethical considerations in engaging children and adolescents in HIV research to address barriers to care and treatment
10. Operational definition of test and start in the Nigeria context and its impact and implication on programming
11. Translational research to explore effectiveness, acceptability and feasibility of biomedical advances for HIV cure/long term re-mission, in partnership with global cure initiatives.



12. Trends in cancers and NCDs co-morbidities among PLHWAs

13. Prevalence and impact of mental health illness among PLHIV, key population and adolescents

14. Impact of test and start on incidence of TB co-infection among PLHWAs

15. Evaluation of most effective intervention to treat HIV co-infection and co-morbidity among children including TB, malaria and other common opportunistic infections and malnutrition



Cross-cutting issues/programme enablers





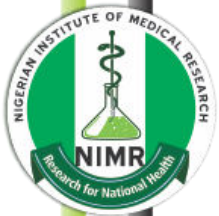
1. Research on the effectiveness of integrated models or approaches for controlling HIV epidemic in Nigeria, including task-shifting
2. Expenditure analysis and Cost-Effectiveness study on different aspect of HIV programming
3. Models for optimizing HIV funding in Nigeria
4. Effective models of engagement of leadership for sustainability and ownership of HIV response.

5. Strengthening country ownership and accountability for HIV programs including planning, implementation and monitoring of progress of policy intervention
6. Effects of existing laws on the implementation of international recognized interventions for key populations (harm reduction for PWID; reaching MSM with targeted interventions)
7. Changing dynamics on the interaction between GBVs and HIV



Mechanism for Commissioning Priority Research

1. Determination of the specific area of research focus and key research questions under the priority themes by NHARRG and subsequent publication as call for proposals
2. Call for proposals shall be widely circulated in all the states of the federation through the State AIDS Control Agency, academic and research institution and other channels, including at least two national newspapers.



Process for Commissioning Priority Research

3. Criteria for awarding grants shall be unambiguous, clear and stated in the call for proposals
4. Recommendation for award, level of funding, duration and other technical aspects shall be made by the NHARRG, through its secretariat, to the Director General for approval
5. NHARRG will develop the implementation and monitoring plan
6. Release of funds shall be contingent on the recommendation of the NHARRG



Opportunities for Research Projects

- Availability of large collection of programmatic data
- PrEP demonstration project data
- Priorities research areas
- On-going project and programme



Challenges

- Research not a priority
- Private sector participation almost absent
- Policy somersault/Instability
- Poor leadership and lack of mentorship programme
- others



Way Forward

- Capacity strengthening for Grantsmanship
- Collaboration and networking
- Advocacy for private sector support for Research



Conclusion

- National HIV Research agenda provides both opportunity and guidance
- Investigators working or intending to work in area of HIV should key into it



- Thank you

