

HIV VACCINES AND THE COMMUNITY

The Community Advisory Board Bulletin

Volume 3, Issue 1 December 2001/January 2002

African AIDS Conference De-brief

By SIOBHAN MALONE, COMMUNITY PROJECT COORDINATOR

The 12th International Conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa (CISMA), December 9-13, brought together nearly 5,000 people from 61 different countries. CISMA is held every two years in a different country on the African continent. This year's event took place in the city of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, West Africa. The main focus of the conference, as mentioned in the opening ceremony by Blaise Compaore, the President of Burkina Faso; Peter Piot, the head of UNAIDS; Jerry Rollings, the former president of Ghana; Bernard Kouchner, the French Minister of Health; and others; was the issue of access to AIDS treatment for all Africans. Peter Piot spoke passionately about the treatment issue, stating that "2002 should be the year of great actions after 2001, the year of great declarations." On a continent that makes up 10% of the world's population, but accounts for 80% of all those infected with HIV, treatment is a priority. In his opening address, President Blaise Compaore stated, "This epidemic demands a wider and stronger response, supported by a continued political commitment and complete and active community involvement....Communities should be strongly implicated in AIDS prevention strategies." We at the HVTN Community Education Program couldn't agree more with President Compaore. Although he didn't mention HIV vaccines explicitly, we know that vaccine work is one of the major ongoing AIDS prevention strategies.

Although the majority of the conference was devoted to issues surrounding access to treatment, HIV vaccines were the main topic at a few roundtable discussions and forums. The issue of clades was a topic

for the first roundtable discussion. Presenters agreed that currently there is not enough scientific evidence to state definitively whether or not clade-specific vaccines are important. Some felt that it was necessary to develop vaccines specific to those regions of Africa hardest hit by the epidemic, in case it is discovered that clades do matter.

The second roundtable discussion focused on vaccine trials and international partnerships in Africa. A representative from the WHO-UNAIDS HIV Vaccine Initiative (HVI) spoke about the mission of the HVI to promote development, facilitate evaluation, and address future availability of preventive HIV vaccines, with a focus on the need of developing countries. (More information on the initiative can be found at www.who.int/HIV-vaccines/.) The French National Agency for AIDS Research (ANRS) presented information on some of the preliminary HIV vaccine work that they are doing in Ivory Coast, Senegal and Burkina Faso. Other programs presenting at this roundtable included the African AIDS Vaccine Programme (AAVP); Walter Reed's work in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Cameroon; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Retro-CI project in Ivory Coast. Dr. Ibou Thior from Botswana talked about the Botswana-Harvard Partnership and an upcoming HVTN protocol in which the site will be involved. He also talked about the role of CABs, which made me, sitting in the audience, very happy!

On the final day of the conference, Dr. Max Essex from the Harvard AIDS Institute spoke about "Which vaccines for Africa?" in the morning plenary session. He discussed the need to help ensure that HIV vaccines be designed with properties that are appropriate for Africa. Dr. Essex also talked about the establishment of CABs as a requirement before beginning a trial.

Vaccines were also the focus of a community workshop facilitated by International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO). The skills building workshop, *Community Preparedness in HIV/AIDS Development and Testing*, did a great job of getting the attendees to really think about some of the issues surrounding policies, advocacy, and community grass-roots work regarding HIV vaccines. (More information on ICASO's work can be found at their website, www.icaso.org)

All of the conference participants that I spoke with regarding HIV vaccines were very interested in learning more about the current situation, and many wanted to know how they could get their countries involved. With enough political will and community mobilization, hopefully many more African nations will soon be involved in the quest for an effective HIV vaccine. Global community involvement is necessary to ensure that issues such as access to treatment and participation in HIV vaccine development receive the attention and financial and human resources that are necessary to combat HIV/AIDS. ☸



FRENCH TRANSLATION, Page 2

Rapport de la Conférence en Afrique

PAR SIOBHAN MALONE, COORDINATRICE DU PROJET COMMUNAUTAIRE

La 12^e Conférence Internationale sur le SIDA et les MST en Afrique (CISMA), a réuni près de 5.000 personnes de 61 pays différents du 9 au 13 décembre, 2001. CISMA a lieu tous les deux ans dans un pays différent du continent africain. Cette année c'était la ville de Ouagadougou au Burkina Faso, en Afrique de l'Ouest, qui a accueilli la conférence dont point central était la question d'accès aux traitements du SIDA par tous les Africains. Ce point a été mentionné par Blaise Compaore, Président du Burkina Faso; par Peter Piot, Directeur d'ONUSIDA; par Jerry Rollings, ancien Président du Ghana; par Bernard Kouchner, Ministre français de la Santé; et par d'autres aux cérémonies d'ouverture. Peter Piot a parlé avec passion sur le problème d'accès aux traitements en disant que "2002 devrait être l'année des grandes actions après 2001, l'année des grandes déclarations." Sur un continent qui compte 10% de la population du monde, mais qui compte 80% de ceux infectés du VIH, les traitements sont une priorité des pays africains. Dans son discours d'ouverture, le Président Compaore a dit que "Cette épidémie exige une réponse élargie, massive et soutenue par un engagement politique fort et une mobilisation communautaire totale et vigoureuse. Nous au Programme d'Éducation Communautaire du HVTN sommes tout à fait d'accord avec le Président Compaore. Quoiqu'il n'ait pas fait mention explicite des vaccins anti-VIH, nous savons que le travail sur les vaccins est actuellement une des stratégies majeures de prévention du SIDA.

Bien que la majeure partie de la conférence était consacrée à ce qui concerne l'accès aux traitements, les vaccins contre le VIH était le point central de quelques tables rondes et forums. La première table ronde a posé la question si la diversité génétique du VIH a de l'importance. Les présentateurs étaient persuadés qu'il n'y a pas à présent assez d'évidence scientifique pour dire définitivement si les vaccins "clade-specific" sont importants ou non. Quelques-uns pensaient qu'il fallait développer des vaccins spécifiques aux régions d'Afrique les plus touchées par l'épidémie au cas où on découvre que les "clades" ont de l'importance.

La deuxième table ronde se concentrait sur les essais cliniques du vaccin contre le VIH et les partenariats internationaux en Afrique. Un représentant de l'Initiative du Vaccin VIH de l'OMS-ONUSIDA (HVI) a parlé de la mission de la HVI à promouvoir le développement, faciliter l'évaluation, et s'adresser au future disponibilité des vaccins préventifs VIH, se concentrant sur les besoins des pays en voie de développement. (Pour en savoir davantage sur l'initiative, voir le site www.who.int/HIV-vaccines/.) L'Agence Nationale de Recherche sur le SIDA (ANRS) en France a présenté de l'information sur des projets de travail préliminaire sur le vaccin anti-VIH qu'elle fait en Côte d'Ivoire, au Sénégal, et au Burkina Faso. Parmi d'autres organisations qui travaillent sur les vaccins en Afrique, et qui ont présenté à cette table ronde, il y avait: the African AIDS Vaccine Programme (AAVP); les projets de Walter Reed en Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, et Cameroon; et le Projet Retro-CI en Cote d'Ivoire du Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC). Le Docteur Ibou Thior du Botswana a parlé du Partenariat Botswana-Harvard et du prochain protocol HVTN auquel prendra part le site de Botswana. Il a parlé de rôle du Conseil Consultatif Communautaire (CAB) ce qui m'a rendue très heureuse en tant que participante de la conférence.

Le dernier jour de la conférence, le Docteur Max Essex du Harvard AIDS Institute a posé la question "Quels Vaccins pour l'Afrique?" à la session plénière du matin. Il a parlé de la nécessité d'assurer que les vaccins anti-VIH soient créés avec des propriétés appropriées à l'Afrique. Le Docteur Essex a parlé aussi de l'établissement des CAB comme étant obligatoire avant le commencement d'un essai.

Les vaccins étaient le point central d'un atelier communautaire facilité par l'International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO). L'atelier de travaux pratiques, *L'état de préparation de la communauté pour le développement et les essais VIH/SIDA*, a réussi à nous faire penser à et essayer de résoudre des problèmes politiques, juridiques et communautaires en ce qui concerne les essais des vaccinales anti-VIH. (Renseignez-vous sur le travail d'ICASO auprès de leur site web: www.icaso.org)

Tous les participants à la conférence à qui j'ai parlé des vaccins anti-VIH ont indiqué un intérêt à apprendre davantage sur la situation à l'heure actuelle et voulaient savoir comment ils pourraient engager leurs pays. Il suffit d'une bonne volonté politique et d'une mobilisation de la communauté pour engager encore d'autres pays africains dans la quête d'un vaccin anti-VIH efficace. Il faut l'engagement de la communauté globale pour assurer que les problèmes des traitements et de la participation dans le développement des vaccins VIH reçoivent l'attention et les ressources financières et humaines nécessaires à combattre le VIH/SIDA. ☘

Grupo Pela Vidda

POR OCTAVIO VALENTE JUNIOR, PRESIDENTE DE GRUPO PELA VIDDA/RIO DE JANEIRO



O Grupo Pela Vidda (Valorização, Integração e Dignidade do Doente de Aids) é uma organiza-

ção não governamental, de base comunitária, sem fins lucrativos, formada por pessoas vivendo com HIV/Aids (PWA), seus amigos e familiares. Fundado em 1989, pelo escritor e ativista Herbert Daniel, o Grupo desenvolve uma série de ações nos campos da prevenção e da assistência, envolvendo e empoderando PWA.

No ano de 1999 o Grupo Pela Vidda, que já integrava o Comitê Nacional de Vacinas do Ministério da Saúde, foi convidado para integrar o Comitê Comunitário de Acompanhamento de Pesquisa (CAB) do protocolo 026 do HVTN, coordenado pelo Projeto Praça Onze, do Hospital Escola São Francisco de Assis, da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Este comitê privilegiou a participação de representantes de vários segmentos sociais, com experiência relacionada a aspectos da saúde coletiva, saúde mental, populações empobrecidas, direitos humanos, ativismo em Aids e em direitos dos homossexuais, que de alguma forma atuassem nas diversas áreas de controle social e combate à epidemia de Aids. A partir deste convite, vários foram os momentos em que representantes do estudo vieram ao Grupo falar sobre a pesquisa, o que tem possibilitado uma ampliação da discussão sobre a importância do desenvolvimento de uma vacina preventiva da Aids, entre as pessoas que frequentam a instituição. O Grupo Pela Vidda também tem auxiliado a equipe do projeto na divulgação da pesquisa e no recrutamento de voluntários.

(Continued on page 5)

Al ritmo del site HVTU en Lima

POR CÉSAR BAZÁN, COMMUNITY EDUCATOR DE IMPACTA

Quienes visitan Lima, normalmente se sorprenden con la alta velocidad de nuestros taxis. En su próximo viaje a Lima experimentará el ritmo local de nuestra gente pero no sólo al viajar en taxi, lo sentirá también con nuestros miembros del CAC, el equipo de Impacta y las comunidades con las que trabajamos.

La siguiente historia tuvo lugar hace un par de semanas, probablemente las más rápidas de todo el año. De manera que mientras la lea, le aconsejamos abrocharse el cinturón de seguridad.

Más de 8 millones de personas viven en Lima, casi de la tercera parte de nuestro país. A causa de la pluridad de razas, creencias y estados socioeconómicos, trabajar con nuestra comunidad es tan interesante como desafiante. En sus primeros catorce meses, Impacta ha confirmado que atender grupos humanos con honestidad y respeto es la clave para lograr su colaboración estratégica. Voluntarios potenciales se encuentran altamente interesados en participar en los próximos estudios y nuestro staff se encuentra enfocado en empezarlos tan pronto sea posible.

Programa “Puentes”

Para atender la comunidad HSH de manera adecuada, Impacta recientemente lanzó un programa de salud al que denominó “Puentes”, en Inglés: Bridges. “Puentes” viene ofreciendo servicios que promueven el bienestar mental, físico y social de la comunidad HSH.

Iniciativas legales

Dos meses previos al 1 de Diciembre, Impacta empezó a trabajar en el Día Mundial de Lucha Contra el SIDA. Nuestros miembros contribuyeron a liderar la coordinación de las actividades relacionadas a la versión local de esta Conmemoración de Unión Internacional. De esta manera, la “Organización Multisectorial” conformada por instituciones como ONUSIDA, OPS, Ministerio de Salud, La Red SIDA e Impacta entre otras organizaciones, trabajaron juntas en la coordinación de varias actividades que se implementaron más tarde a lo largo de nuestro país. Una de las actividades más importantes fue la “Audiencia en el Congreso de la República”, que tuvo lugar el 28 de Noviembre. En esta oportunidad, promovimos el acceso a tratamiento integral para personas que viven con VIH y al mismo tiempo, la creación de una Comisión Nacional de Lucha Contra el SIDA. Este será un largo y difícil camino, pero esta acción fue un acertado punto de inicio.

Taller de Periodistas

Previo al 1 de Diciembre, Impacta implementó un taller de periodistas enfocado en distribuir entre los periodistas, adecuados mensajes acerca de prevención en ITS y VIH/SIDA y el estado de la epidemia, pero especialmente esta oportunidad fue aprovechada como una excelente plataforma para lanzar el estudio de la Vacuna Contra el VIH pronto a implementarse en Lima.

Acciones civiles

Imitando la iniciativa de Cleve Jones, una de las acciones más emotivas resultó ser la ceremonia de las mantas. Dicha iniciativa fue implementada a partir de la propuesta de los voluntarios de Impacta y logró con-

gregar a más de mil personas y más de doscientas mantas. Ese día, personas y mantas cubrieron la Plaza Mayor de Lima, nuestra plaza principal ubicada en el centro de la ciudad, entre la Catedral y los Palacios Municipal y de Gobierno.

A partir de este tipo de acciones, la participación y especialmente la cobertura ofrecida por los medios logró un impacto antes no experimentado. Sólo teniendo en cuenta las actividades y la información implementada y distribuida por Impacta, la cobertura representó un ahorro de más de US\$ 60,000, casi 2 horas en radio nacional, más de 6,000 centímetros cuadrados en prensa escrita y una hora y media en TV.

Ese par de semanas fueron tan intensas como importantes, y es apenas el inicio. Desde estas líneas, nos gustaría agradecerle a cada uno de los miembros de nuestro CAB por sus recomendaciones en cómo acceder a nuestras poblaciones de la mejor manera, al equipo de Impacta por su inagotable energía, apoyo y entusiasmo; y a la Comunidad, por su compromiso y contribución en detener la epidemia. ☘



Miembros del CAB y colaborador. De izquierda a derecha: Jose Luis Cairo, Rosa Cortéz, Manuel Rouillon, Guisella Florez, Julio Chamobumbi, Hanna Valdivia, y Aldo Aranjó.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The rhythm of the Lima HVTU

BY CÉSAR BAZÁN, COMMUNITY EDUCATOR AT IMPACTA

People who visit Lima are usually shocked by the high speed of our taxis. On your next trip to Lima, you will experience the local rhythm of our people, not only when you travel by taxi, but also with our CAB members, Impacta’s crew, and the communities we work with.

The following story took place over a couple of weeks, probably the fastest of the year. So, while reading, you’re advised to wear your seat belt!

More than 8 million people live in Lima, almost a third of the country’s population. Because of the great number of different ethnicities, beliefs, and social strata, working with our communities is interesting, but also challenging. In its first fourteen months, Impacta has confirmed that assisting groups with honesty and respect is the key to accomplishing strategic collaboration. Potential volunteers are very interested in participating in upcoming trials and all our staff is focused on getting these trials going as quickly as possible.

“Puentes” Program

To assist the MSM (men who have sex with men) community prop-

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

erly, Impacta recently launched a health program called “Puentes” (“Bridges” in English). Puentes offers services which promote mental, physical and social welfare for MSM.

Political Lobbying

Two months prior to December 1, Impacta began working on World AIDS Day. Our members contributed to leading the coordination for activities related to the local version of the International Union Commemoration. This “Multisectorial Organization,” formed by institutions such as UNAIDS, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the Ministry of Health, the AIDS Network, and Impacta, among other organizations, worked together coordinating several national activities. One of the most important activities was the “Presentation at the Republic Congress,” which took place on November 28. With this opportunity, we promoted comprehensive access to medical treatment for people who live with HIV and, at the same time, the creation of a National Commission Against AIDS. This will be a very hard and long road, but this action was a very good starting point.

Media Training

Prior to December 1, Impacta implemented a training focused on media professionals delivering proper key messages about sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS prevention and epidemiology status. This opportunity also presented an excellent platform from which to launch information regarding the HIV vaccine trial to be held in Lima.

Civil Actions

Imitating the Cleve Jones initiative, on December 1 Impacta’s volunteers implemented the “Quilt” ceremony, a very touching event which counted more than one thousand participants and two hundred quilts. That day, people and quilts covered Lima’s Plaza Mayor, our main plaza located downtown between the Cathedral and the Municipal and Government Palaces.

This action led to record participation and media coverage never before experienced. Just from the activities and information implemented and delivered from Impacta, that coverage represented more than US \$60,000 saved (almost 2 hours in national radio, around 6,000 square centimeters in newspapers and magazines, and one and a half hours on TV).

Those couple of weeks were intense and important, and they are just the beginning. In these lines, we would like to thank our CAB members for their recommendations regarding how best to reach our populations, Impacta’s crew for their never-ending energy, support and enthusiasm and the community for their commitment and contribution to stopping this epidemic. ☘



En el Taller de Periodistas: Gian Carlo Galliani, Director Ejecutivo de Impacta; Adriana Gómez, Consejera de ONUSIDA; Dr. Guillermo Guibovich, Epidemiólogo Profesional Nacional de OPS; y la Dra. Lourdes Kusunoki, Coordinadora del Estudio HPTN de Impacta.

Botswana-Harvard Think Tank

BY ANDREW LAMBERT, COMMUNITY EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS MANAGER

Recently, I traveled to Gaborone, Botswana for the Harvard AIDS Institute’s Think Tank on HIV Vaccines for Developing Countries (November 27) and presented in the session entitled *Ongoing and Future Efforts in Multi-Center Trials in Southern Africa*. Some of the major themes discussed at this meeting, that are imperative both now and in the future, include:

- Stigma and traditional societies: the ethical dilemma of individual consent along with community and family consent. Do we need the latter and how do we obtain it?
- The ethical necessity and cost of full-time counselors trained to work with local populations before, during, and after trials.
- Ensuring access to effective treatment for participants who contract HIV during the trial and how that will work given the differing levels of infrastructure, drug cost, and availability from country to country.
- Closed communities, military, and police force as potential cohorts and the debate around coercion.

Inauguration of Botswana’s new AIDS Research Lab, December 1, 2001



I was also able to meet with the newly formed Botswana Community Advisory Board. Dr. Tonya Villafana, Site Director for the Vaccine Initiative Botswana-Harvard Partnership for Research and Education, has focused on developing a community advisory group and education team. Professor Sheila Tlou, an experienced HIV/AIDS community educator around HIV/AIDS issues in Botswana, is working with Tonya to develop their CAB and community education plan.

Their initial advisory group is comprised of around 20 individuals representing different organizations and groups, from the media to traditional healers. The group is currently consulting with itself and the trial staff to understand what is an HIV vaccine trial; what are their roles as CAB volunteers; how they will organize themselves; and how they will be educators to the community and advisors to the site researchers at the same time. This is a very dynamic and motivated group. I feel that they are heading in the right direction in terms of not assuming the role of the “voice of the people.” Rather, they are members from different communities wanting to organize themselves to find out more about HIV vaccine trials and what that means to them and their fellow citizens. ☘

(Continued from page 2)

O Grupo Pela Vidda do Rio de Janeiro desenvolveu uma série de atividades referentes ao Dia Mundial de Luta Contra Aids, 1º de dezembro. Como de costume, utilizamos a data para reflexão e avaliação sobre nossas conquistas e os desafios que ainda precisam ser enfrentados.

A agenda de atividades relativas ao dia Mundial de Luta Contra Aids compreendeu as seguintes ações:

- Participação em salas de bate-papo (chat) de sites de veículos de comunicação (jornais) prestando informações sobre prevenção ao HIV, direitos humanos e tratamento das pessoas vivendo com HIV/Aids;
- Participação em programas (entrevistas e debates) de televisão de grande repercussão, cuja temática foi o dia 1º de dezembro;
- Veiculação em rádios dos jingles de prevenção do Grupo Pela Vidda – USE CAMISINHA;
- Divulgação de mensagens em painéis eletrônicos em via expressa e em vários pontos da cidade – “PARA ONDE VOCÊ FOR, VÁ COM SEGURANÇA. USE CAMISINHA. GRUPO PELA VIDDA”;
- Ato de protesto no dia 30 de novembro – passeata partindo da sede do Grupo Pela Vidda em direção à Secretaria de Saúde do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Ministério da Saúde), com faixas e cartazes, denunciando à população a falta de comprometimento do Governador do Estado e do Secretário de Saúde, para a implementação de políticas mais consistentes de assistência e prevenção;
- Intervenção junto à população, no dia 1º de dezembro, na principal estação ferroviária da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, quando distribuímos material informativo e preservativos, e prestamos informações sobre prevenção ao HIV, direitos humanos e tratamento das pessoas vivendo com HIV/Aids;
- Incremento das atividades desenvolvidas nos grupos de auto-ajuda, com a participação de vários convidados falando sobre dados epidemiológicos, cidadania e estudos sobre prevenção ao HIV, além de uma exposição de pinturas e lançamento de um livro sobre experiências de pessoas vivendo com HIV/Aids.

As ações que foram desenvolvidas resultaram numa expressiva visibilidade do Grupo Pela Vidda na mídia, através de 7 entrevistas e debates em televisão e rádios, e 12 notas e reportagens na mídia impressa. ☘

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Grupo Pela Vidda

BY OCTAVIO VALENTE JUNIOR, PRESIDENT OF GRUPO PELA VIDDA/RIO DE JANEIRO AND RIO HVTU CAB MEMBER

The Pela Vidda Group (*Valorização, Integração e Dignidade do Doente de Aids* — appreciation, integration, and dignity for AIDS patients) is a non-profit community-based NGO. It was set up by people living with HIV/AIDS (PWA), and by their friends and relatives. The writer and activist Herbert Daniel founded the Group in 1989, and it sustains a

series of activities concerning and empowering PWA in the areas of prevention and support.

In 1999 the Pela Vidda Group, already participating in the Ministry of Health's National Vaccine Committee, was invited to take part in the Community Committee for Monitoring the HVTN Protocol 026 research; these investigations were coordinated by the Praça Onze project of the São Francisco de Assis Training Hospital at the Federal University in Rio de Janeiro. This Community Committee was able to include representatives of various social groups to participate — people with experience in aspects of public health, mental health, poor people, human rights, AIDS activism, and gay rights who in some way work in the various areas of social regulation and combatting the AIDS epidemic. Following this invitation, researchers from the study came to discuss the research a number of times, and this helped the people at the institution to widen the discussion about the importance of developing a vaccine that would prevent AIDS. In addition, the Pela Vidda Group helped the project team to disseminate the research and to recruit volunteers.

The Rio de Janeiro Pela Vidda Group developed a series of activities around the World Day of Struggle against AIDS, December 1. We always use that day to reflect on and evaluate our achievements as well as the challenges still to be faced.

The schedule for the World Day of Struggle against AIDS included the following activities:

- Participation in chat rooms on sites run by the media (newspapers), providing information about preventing HIV, human rights, and treatments for people living with HIV/AIDS;
- We took part in very influential television programs (interviews and debates) covering 1 December;
- Transmission on radio stations of the Pela Vidda Group's prevention jingles — “USE A CONDOM;”
- We placed messages on electronic panels on highways and in various locations in the city — “WHEREVER YOU GO, GO SAFELY,” “USE A CONDOM,” “PELA VIDDA GROUP;”
- A protest action on November 30— a walk from the headquarters of the Pela Vidda Group towards the Health Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro State (the Ministry of Health), with banners and placards which revealed to the public that the Governor of the State and the Health Secretary were failing to engage in implementing more consistent policies for support and prevention;
- An intervention involving the public on December 1— in Rio de Janeiro's main train station we distributed informational material and condoms, and we provided information about HIV prevention, human rights, and treatments for people living with HIV/AIDS;
- Extra activities for self-help groups — several invited speakers talked about epidemiological data, citizenship, and studies of HIV prevention. There was also an exhibition of paintings and a book launch of a work about the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS.

As a result of these actions by us, the Pela Vidda Group was very visible in the media, with seven television interviews and debates, and twelve notices and articles in the press. ☘



Information Tid-Bits

Merck, NIH/NIAID, HVTN Working Together

Under an agreement signed in December by The National Institutes of Health and Merck, the HVTN will evaluate promising vaccines developed by the pharmaceutical company. In a press release, Dr. Anthony Fauci noted, "Scientists in industry, academia, and government have unique and necessary contributions to make to the important work of developing a vaccine against HIV."

The agreement offers the company access to the network's clinical testing expertise, including protocol design, immune response analysis, community involvement, regulatory guidance, and data and safety monitoring for Phase I, II, and III clinical trials. Merck will also provide HVTN with certain proprietary scientific tools and methodologies that can be adopted for use in the evaluation of other, competing vaccines.

Merck began testing their vaccines in humans in late 1999. The company will continue its ongoing HIV vaccine development program, which includes a number of independent trials that are underway or planned.

New NIAID Brochure

The NIAID has put out a new brochure: ***HIV Vaccines Explained: Making HIV Vaccines a Reality***. The brochure explains in simple terms various aspects of HIV vaccine development, including:

- The need for an HIV vaccine
- Preventive versus therapeutic HIV vaccines
- Is an HIV vaccine available now?
- Testing HIV vaccines
- Protecting research participants
- What is an HIV vaccine?
- History of vaccines
- Community participation in vaccine research
- How to help



Contact your site community educator for a copy or email Steve Wakefield wakefield@hvtn.org and be sure to include your mailing address and the number of copies you would like sent to you in the email.

American Journal of Public Health Article

The American Journal of Public Health ran an interesting article on CABs in the December 2001 issue. An abstract of the article can be found at the web address below.

<http://www.ajph.org/cgi/content/abstract/91/12/1938>

The Role of Community Advisory Boards: Involving Communities in the Informed Consent Process. Ronald P. Strauss, Sohini Sengupta, Sandra Crouse Quinn, Jean Goepfinger, Cora Spaulding, Susan M. Kegeles, and Greg Millett. *Am J Public Health* 2001; 91: 1938-1943. ☘

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CAB PROTOCOL WORKING GROUP CONFERENCE CALL:



Saturday, February 2, 2002, 12 noon E.T./ 9 a.m. P.T.

GLOBAL CAB CONFERENCE CALL:



Thursday, February 14, 2002, 7 p.m. E.T./ 4 p.m. P.T.

(Look out for a possible change in the date and time of this call.)

COMMUNITY EDUCATION/RECRUITMENT COORDINATION CALL:



Tuesday, February 19, 2002, 12 noon E.T./ 9 a.m. P.T.

HIV Prevention and Vaccine Conferences:

9TH CONFERENCE ON RETROVIRUSES AND OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS

February 24–28, 2002, Seattle, WA

2002 COMMUNITY PLANNING LEADERSHIP SUMMIT FOR HIV PREVENTION

March 6–9, 2002, Chicago, IL



Visit www.aids2002.com for more conference details.



Please send suggestions, questions, and article submissions to:

Siobhan Malone, Community Project Coordinator

HVTN/FHCRC, 1100 Fairview Avenue North

P.O. Box 19024, Mailstop: MW832

Seattle, WA 98109-1024

siobhan@hvtn.org

Tel: 206-667-6350 Fax: 206-667-6366



HIV VACCINE
TRIALS NETWORK