**RAMP Project Abstract: NEW YORK, US**

**Project Title: Experiences and perceptions about accessing HIV prevention services and participating in HIV vaccine trials: The voices of Black men who have sex with men (BMSM)**

Project Type: Short-term Project 8-10 weeks On-site

Proposed Project Dates: Flexible 8 -10 weeks On-site between (May 2023 – September 2023)

Project Site: New York Blood Center, New York

**Project Overview**:
The goal of Project ACHIEVE/New York Blood Center Clinical Research Site based in New York City is to work on novel ways to prevent HIV and other infectious diseases, including the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. As part of the research site, you will have the opportunity to work with a diverse team of clinical investigators, epidemiologists, social scientists, community engagement and recruitment staff, and more and be immersed in innovative clinical, socio-behavioral, and epidemiologic research. As a RAMP scholar you will have the opportunity to work with Melonie Walcott, DrPH, and Hong Van Tieu, MD, MS, Lab Head and Associate Member of the Laboratory of Infectious Disease Prevention at the New York Blood Center (NYBC), and the Project Achieve research team consisting of co-investigators, clinicians, counselors, recruiters, and community educators who are experienced in recruitment, community engagement, study implementation and conduct, and retention in clinical research studies among general and at-risk populations. While participating in this 8 to 10-week program, you will work with the team to conduct a qualitative study to examine Black men who have sex with men's (BMSM's) experiences and perceptions about accessing HIV prevention services and participating in HIV vaccine trials. The study also seeks to identify measures that could be implemented to engage BMSM and secure buy-in in HIV prevention research and services. You will be integrally involved in all aspects of the study including recruiting, consenting, conducting the in-depth interviews (IDIs), coding, analyzing the data, and preparing the manuscript. You will also be required to complete the NYBC human subject trainings before joining the study team.

**Project Summary**:
This proposed 8 to 10-week qualitative study aims to examine Black men who have sex with men's (BMSM) experiences and perceptions about accessing HIV prevention services and participating in HIV vaccine trials. The study is being conducted at the New York Blood Center and will involve 30 BMSM who reside in New York. Participants will be recruited using multiple methods such as direct community outreach and engagement, and distributing flyers and palm cards at nightclubs, bars, shelters, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that provide services to BMSM. The Integrative Behavioral Model (IBM) will inform the development of the study including the design of the in-depth interview (IDI) guide. The data will be collected using IDIs which will last 60-90 minutes and will be audio recorded. Participants will also be asked to complete a brief sociodemographic and behavioral questionnaire before participating in the IDIs. Dedoose qualitative software will be used to facilitate the management and analysis of the data. This qualitative software will allow us to perform high-quality coding and analysis and work in teams, thereby reducing the likelihood of introducing bias in the data analysis. The Framework Method will be used to systematically organize and elucidate the themes.

Recruitment and enrollment of participants as well as data collection and coding have started on this project by an HVTN RAMP Scholar from the 2022-2023 cycle, with 10 interviews completed to date. As a RAMP scholar for the 2023-2024 cycle, you will lead recruitment and enrollment of additional 20 participants in the study, as well as complete the data collection and coding process and prepare a draft manuscript with the guidance of your mentors.

**Regulatory requirements for the project and plans for completing them**: IRB approval will be obtained from the New York Blood Center Institutional Review Board before the start of this study. The RAMP Scholar and all members of the research team will complete Human Subjects Protection/Good Clinical Practice trainings and any required IRB and institutional trainings before they are allowed to participate in the study. Informed consent will be obtained from all research participant before they are enrolled in the study. Internal auditing will be conducted to ensure compliance with the study protocol and research/IRB guidelines. Electronic data will be stored on password protected computers at the NYBC; hard copies will be stored in locked filing cabinets accessible to members of the research team only.

**Expected Deliverables**:

- HVTN Full Group Meeting – presentation
- Abstract submission to a scientific conference
- Manuscript for submission to a peer-reviewed journal

**Project Contact Person(s):**


- Melonie Walcott, DrPH, MPH, mwalcott@nybc.org
- Hong Van Tieu, MD, MS, FIDSA, htieu@nybc.org
- Victoria Frye, DrPH, MPH, vfrye@nybc.org