

RAMP Project Abstract: HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Project Title: Risk perception, HIV prevention seeking behaviors and access to HIV prevention methods post HIV Vaccine Efficacy Trial participation.

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

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

Project Site: Seke South, Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe

Project Overview:

Seke South CRS is a clinical research site whose primary purpose is to conduct clinical trials in the quest to find safe and effective HIV prevention strategies involving HIV vaccines, monoclonal antibodies, long acting injectables and PrEP. The Clinical Trials Unit has over two decades experience in conducting phase I-III trials in the advancement of HIV prevention. As part of the RAMP scholar's research team, they will have the opportunity to work with clinical investigators, epidemiologists, social scientists and researchers from other disciplines. For this project, the scholar will learn qualitative data collection methods and analysis and post study behaviors among HVTN 705 participants who participated in an HVTN trial. HVTN 705 was the first HIV vaccine efficacy trial in Zimbabwe, and one of the largest in Sub-Saharan Africa. The study had an early termination by the sponsor hence we seek to explore how the participants' behaviors changed after they integrated back into society. Through this project, the RAMP scholar will acquire skills to consent and facilitate qualitative interviews with the help of the site Social Behavioral Scientist. Ideally the RAMP scholar will work onsite for 8-10 weeks. If the scholar cannot travel to the site due to COVID-19 restrictions, the project can be done remotely with secured access to participants records. After data collection is complete, the scholar with the help of the mentor will make a data analysis plan and analyze the data. The scholar will be provided guidance on manuscript writing by the mentor. The scholar will also be expected to prepare an oral or poster presentation for the HVTN 2023 annual meeting.

Project Summary:

During participation in the HVTN 705 study, study participants (all who were at high risk of contracting HIV), were provided with comprehensive HIV prevention support which included risk reduction counselling, condoms and PrEP. The purpose of this project is to understand HIV risk perception, HIV prevention seeking behaviors, and access to HIV prevention services post study participation among participants of an HIV vaccine efficacy trial. We will enroll up to 20 randomly selected participants who participated in the HVTN 705 study. The study will be qualitative and there will be audio recorded In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with HVTN 705 participants. The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To compare participants' risk perceptions post study participation versus during the study.
2. To establish HIV prevention seeking behaviors post study participation.
3. To determine barriers and facilitators to HIV prevention methods post study participation.

Regulatory requirements for the project and plans for completing them:

The proposal will be submitted to the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (MRCZ) and the Joint Research Ethics Committee for University of Zimbabwe Faculty of Medicine and Parirenyatwa Group Hospitals (JREC) in February 2023. We expect response from our IRBs within 2 months, thus approval will be obtained before the project starts in May 2023. The scholar will be required to complete GCP and HSP training, online courses are available. We will assist the scholar in completing the required trainings.

Expected Deliverables:

8-10 weeks onsite completing trainings and developing and conducting the qualitative study [this can be done virtually with the help of the site Behavioural Scientists, ensuring participants' confidentiality]. 6 months off site analysing data and preparing the poster or oral presentation at the HVTN full group meeting in May 2023 in Washington DC. Preparing a manuscript for submission for publication.

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