

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

Preferred Scholar On-Site Project Dates: Flexible 8 -10 weeks On-site between (May 2024 – November 2025)

Project Site: Zimbabwe, Chitungwiza [UZ-CTRC]

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, they 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 any travel 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 2025 annual meeting.

Project Summary:

During participation in the HVTN 705 study, study participants (all who were at high risk of getting infected with 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 2024. We expect response from our IRBs within 2 months, thus approval will be obtained before the project starts in May 2024. 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. 6 months off site analyzing data and preparing the poster or oral presentation at the HVTN full group meeting in May 2025 in Washington DC. Preparing a manuscript for submission for publication.

For the scholar—At the end of their attachment, the scholar will have attained core skills and knowledge in the following areas that are immediately relevant to the mission of the HVTN:

- Engaging with target populations for HIV prevention research.
- Project management—Managing a Qualitative study.
- HIV prevention strategies and research literacy.
- Collaborative research—Intense teamwork with researchers from different backgrounds and institutions.
- Scientific report writing—Preparing brief reports of the rapid cycle iterative sessions and a final report for presentation. There will be 6 months of off-site work on presentations and manuscripts by the scholar in preparation for the scholar to present their work as an oral and poster presentation at the HVTN Full Group Meeting in May 2025 in Washington DC.

Project Contact Person(s) (Name, Email):

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