Establishment of a HIV Vaccine Cohort among Clandestine Female Sex Workers in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: Situation Analysis of Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV Needs

Abdramane BERTHE¹, Nicolas MEDA¹ ², Isidore TRAORE², Souleymane SALOUKA¹, Lalla SANOU¹, Jeremy ROUAMBA¹, Djénéba OUEDRAOGO², Josiane SOME², Félicien SOME² Gilles Tanguy M’BOUTIKI², Philippe MAYAUD³, Nicolas NAGOT⁴, Philippe VAN DE PERRE⁴

¹ Centre Muraz, Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso; ² Site ANRS/UFR-SDS Université de Ouagadougou, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; ³ Clinical Research Unit, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, UK ⁴ Université Montpellier 1, EA 4205 « Transmission, Pathogenèse et Prévention de l’Infection par le VIH »; and CHU Montpellier, Laboratoire de Bactériologie-Virologie, Montpellier, France;

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EDCTP (The European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership)  
ANRS (French National Agency for Research on AIDS and Viral Hepatitis)  
Study Participants (potentiel cohort participants, stakeholders)
Objectives

- To perform a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of past/current interventions for high-risk women’s access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and HIV prevention and care in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

- To assess the SRH and HIV needs of the future EDCTP Cohort participants (part-time Female Sex Workers [FSW] and bar waitresses aged 18-25 years).
Methods (1)

- **Geomapping of sex work venues** was done throughout the city using Geographic Information System (GIS) and participant observation.

- **Qualitative methods** to recruit Key Informants and elicit information on sex work experience and on past/current access to SRH services, HIV prevention and care among FSWs.
Methods (2)

- Enumeration of 5 target populations (seaters, roamers, bar waitresses, women making and selling local beer).

- 4 focus groups discussions with FSWs.

- 37 in-depth interviews were conducted with Key Informants:
  - 17 FSWs
  - 20 other KIs: researchers and leaders of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and national institutions working in the field of HIV/AIDS, hygiene and security.
Results (1)

- Since 1990, more than **17** HIV/AIDS interventions have targeted FSWs in Ouagadougou:
  - Generally focused on **HIV prevention activities**, including education on safer sex, provision of condoms, and access to sexually transmitted infections (STI) services.
  - **Little emphasis has been placed on HIV care** and access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) or on **other SRH issues**.

- In 2009, over **65%** of these interventions were **discontinued** when funding ceased or NGO left.

- **Police** and **legal repression** of prostitution significantly **limits the coverage and impact** of the remaining interventions.
“Hotspots” for sex work in Ouagadougou
Results (2)

- Enumeration of:
  - 1,088 part-time FSWs <25 yo in 125 SW locations (median 10 women/site)
  - 2,487 bar waitresses <25 yo in 699 bars (median 3 women/site)

- Health problems reported by sex workers were mainly STI, malaria, respiratory disease, and HIV infection.
• **Cost** and **stigmatization** limited sex workers' access to public health services.

• The target population interested to have dedicated, accessible, **integrated SRH and HIV/AIDS prevention and care** services offered in a confidential and non-stigmatising way, particularly for the clandestine FSWs.

• Such services would greatly contribute to **build trust** with researchers and enhance willingness to participate in long-term research projects.

• Identified **stakeholders committed** to support the study.
Discussion & Conclusions

• The EDCTP project, by providing integrated SRH and HIV/AIDS services in a discreet/accessible location, will address the SRH and HIV care needs of this highly vulnerable and stigmatized population.

• This will enhance potential participants’ willingness to be recruited in future HIV vaccine trials.

• A new Community Advisory Board (CAB) composed of local AIDS NGOs and FSWs has been now established:
  – Community leaders have suggested this CAB to become the main organism and clearing house for research projects managed the ANRS site in Burkina Faso.
Future perspectives

• Enrollment into the Ouagadougou EDCTP Cohort started in Sept 2009 aiming to be completed by Jan 2010 (N=300 HIV-negative women <25 yo) with an 18-months follow-up.

• Study outcomes:
  – prevalence and incidence of HIV, STI (incl. HPV), cervical dysplasia and pregnancy
  – local molecular epidemiology of HIV
  – mucosal immunological sub-studies

• Other benefits:
  – Transfer of technology of the enzyme-linked immunospot (ELISPOT) technique to study HIV mucosal immunity