Intervention Overview
AGENCY IN RELATIONSHIPS & SAFER PrEP AND MICROBICIDE ADHERENCE

**Purpose**
CHARISMA is an intervention that aims to: increase women’s agency to safely and consistently use oral PrEP and vaginal microbicides; improve male partner communication and support; and reduce harmful gender norms and intimate partner violence (IPV).

**Randomized Controlled Trial**
A pilot study of CHARISMA indicated that the intervention was feasible and acceptable and may have promoted adherence and male partner clinic attendance. The intervention is now being tested in a randomized controlled trial (RCT) with 400 women aged 18-45 in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, South Africa. The RCT will measure the effectiveness of the intervention on improving oral PrEP adherence and partner communication and support; and decreasing IPV and other social harms. All participants receive oral PrEP and are randomized in a 1:1 ratio to receive the standard of care for IPV screening and referral (control arm) or the intervention, which includes assessment using the Healthy Relationship Tool, and tailored empowerment counseling by lay counselors. Participants are offered information and invitation packets for their male partners and are referred to social services, if needed. RCT results are expected in July 2020.

**Technical Support & Scale Up**
We are providing technical support to PrEP programs to address IPV and relationship dynamics in PrEP service delivery. We will work with local stakeholders to scale up the intervention to PrEP clinics in South Africa and other countries when we have evidence of the effectiveness of CHARISMA.

**Toolkit**
The CHARISMA intervention will be packaged into a user-centered toolkit for PrEP implementers. It will include background on the importance of addressing relationship dynamics and IPV in PrEP delivery; description of the intervention components; key findings and lessons learned from the pilot and RCT, and tips and considerations for intervention adaptation.

**Further Enquiries**
Contact info@charismaproject.org if you are interested in learning more about how you can address relationship dynamics and IPV in PrEP programs.
HEART screening tool
Lay counselors administer HEART on a tablet to assess women’s relationships and tailor counseling.

Empowerment counseling
Based on their HEART results, participants receive one of three empowerment counseling modules to help them use a vaginal ring or oral PrEP safely and effectively.
1. Responding to IPV
2. Ring disclosure and partner support
3. Partner communication
Participants are also shown videos about healthy relationships and partner communication.

Male engagement
In the pilot study, CHARISMA staff and community volunteers conducted community workshops, dialogues, radio programs, and door-to-door outreach to increase men’s awareness and acceptance of microbicides and HIV prevention. CHARISMA RCT study participants are offered informational packets to share with their male partners and invitation letters to invite their partners to the clinic.

Referral network
If women have additional needs, counselors refer them to partner organizations for relevant services, including legal and psychosocial support.

Publications