



# Compendium Overview

## Purpose and Contents

Developed by the Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF), this compendium of technical bulletins is designed to promote awareness regarding interventions and innovations within the field of global HIV prevention and treatment for gay men and other men who have sex with men (MSM).

Technical bulletins featured in the compendium include:

- Systemic (Oral) Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Topical (Microbicide) Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)
- Serosorting and Strategic Positioning
- Male Circumcision
- HIV Testing and Counseling (HTC)
- HIV Diagnostic Technology and Advances
- Treatment as Prevention (TasP)
- Treatment 2.0
- Tuberculosis (TB) and Co-infection with HIV
- Viral Hepatitis and Co-infection with HIV

## Background and Landscape Analysis

The field of HIV has recently undergone rapid change and transformation. For the first time since the start of the epidemic, HIV prevention is being prioritized near the top of the global HIV/AIDS agenda. At the same time, approaches to HIV prevention and treatment are now more interconnected than ever. It is clear that support for effective HIV prevention will be key to addressing the global HIV epidemic over the next decade. A more robust prevention and testing scale-up will in turn create opportunities and increased need for comprehensive HIV treatment and care. We know that for every

two people who start antiretroviral therapy, five are infected, underscoring the challenge of providing universal access to prevention and treatment for all those who need it, including gay men and other MSM.

These shifts are happening at a time when evidence for successful approaches is growing, yet global funding and resources for implementing these findings are shrinking. The last two years have seen the emergence of new HIV prevention service options and an expanding evidence base to help us understand them. The demonstrated efficacy of antiretroviral drugs ARVs to prevent HIV transmission has permanently blurred the boundaries between prevention, treatment and care. Yet in the rush to rapidly scale up biomedical interventions such as male circumcision, some countries are proceeding without properly and critically assessing whether such interventions are efficacious for gay men and other MSM.

This mix of innovation and urgency creates an important advocacy opportunity. In 2011, The World Health Organization (WHO) developed and launched its first-ever guidelines for the prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among MSM and transgender people.<sup>1</sup> In July, 2012, *The Lancet* released a special issue devoted to “HIV in Men Who Have Sex with Men.”<sup>2</sup> These developments indicate that the field of HIV prevention is evolving. Advocates and organizations serving MSM should seize this opportunity to ensure that the global HIV/AIDS community takes into account the specific needs and challenges of HIV service provision for MSM.

Given this imperative, the MSMGF has developed a compendium of technical bulletins on current HIV interventions with an emphasis on gay men and other MSM. This effort has been supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bridging the Gaps – health and rights for key populations, and Roche Molecular Diagnostics.

## The MSMGF's Role and Rationale

The development of these technical bulletins builds on the MSMGF's role as a global hub for research, knowledge dissemination, and network building for advocates and service providers working for the health and human rights for gay men and other MSM. In 2010, the MSMGF conducted a survey<sup>1</sup> of more than 5,000 MSM and their service providers around the world regarding access to and knowledge of the spectrum of HIV prevention strategies. Data from this study indicated that less than 30% (29.9%) of MSM surveyed - particularly those residing outside of North America and Europe - believe that antiretroviral medications (ARVs) are easily accessible. Furthermore, less than half of MSM surveyed believe that HIV counseling and testing is easily accessible in their community.<sup>3</sup>

These findings reveal huge prevention and treatment service gaps for MSM globally. At the same time, MSM and their providers responded with a strong interest in learning more about existing and emerging HIV services. It is clear that efforts to inform MSM advocates and service providers of emerging service options, trends, and innovations are urgently needed.

## The MSMGF's Approach and Intent

Intended as a primer for MSM advocates and service providers, this series of technical bulletins covers key interventions and frameworks that have been central to the current global dialogues on HIV prevention, treatment and care. Topics were identified and prioritized based on results of the MSMGF's 2010 survey. We anticipate that additional topics will be covered in future technical bulletins and we welcome your insights and recommendations on the continued development of this series.

Each bulletin was developed utilizing a balanced approach, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of a given intervention or innovation. It is important to emphasize that no single approach can serve as a "silver bullet" for ending the HIV epidemic. Scale-up and implementation of only one or two approaches will not bring the epidemic to a halt. Rather, each intervention should instead be viewed as a possible component in a comprehensive course of action.

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<sup>1</sup>A comprehensive summary of the survey findings is available in the MSMGF report, *Access to HIV Prevention Services and Attitudes about Emerging Strategies*, available for free download at [www.msmgf.org](http://www.msmgf.org).

Such comprehensive plans must be developed and resourced in order for gay men to have equitable access to effective HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services. Local communities of MSM should be supported to create and assess the approaches that best fit their needs. In this spirit, we hope this series of technical bulletins will be of use to gay men, other MSM, and all those who are working to promote their health and human rights worldwide.

## Credits

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## REFERENCES

- 1 Caceres C, Gerbase A, Lo Y-R. *Prevention and Treatment of HIV and Other Sexually Transmitted Infections Among Men Who Have Sex With Men and Transgender People: Recommendations for a Public Health Approach*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2011.
- 2 *The Lancet: HIV in Men Who Have Sex With Men*. London: Richard Horton; July 2012.
- 3 Wilson P, Santos GM, Hebert P, Ayala G. *Access to HIV Prevention Services and Attitudes about Emerging Strategies: A Global Survey of Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) and their Health Care Providers*. Oakland, CA: The Global Forum on MSM and HIV (MSMGF); July 2011.