If we build it, will they come? Developing a Strategic Evaluation Framework (SEF) for Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs)

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BACKGROUND

Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) are products that deliver varied combinations of HIV prevention, other STI prevention, and contraception. The Initiative for MPTs (IMPT), a product neutral collaboration advancing the MPT field, aims to ensure that MPTs are not only efficacious, but also desired, acceptable, and accessible. To this end, the IMPT is building a Strategic Evaluation Framework (SEF) comprised of: 1) a Target Market Profile (TMP), a data summary of market drivers; 2) a Strategic Target Profile (STP), optimal market-based characteristics; and 3) a Target Product Profile (TPP), a listing of optimal clinical characteristics. The SEF will include data from the ARV-based HIV prevention and MPT fields, and will highlight critical research gaps.

METHODS

The initial target market focus for the SEF is young women in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The IMPT is building the TMP through an iterative methodology involving a literature review and key informant interviews. The STP is being built using data from the TMP as well expert consultations, and will be stratified by product type (i.e., daily oral, on-demand, intermediate acting: long-acting topical, ultra long-acting systemic). The TPPs are also stratified by product type and have been developed through expert consultations.

RESULTS

Target Market Profile (TMP)
Findings from the literature review and key informant interviews are largely limited to lessons learned from clinical trials. These data focus on factors related to product adherence, such as perceived product efficacy and sexual partner awareness and acceptability of the product, but adherence data need to be better unpacked. Key themes on end-user preference, acceptability, and facilitators/barriers to product uptake include:

- Sexual partner support and approval
- Product efficacy (proven, potential, and perceived)
- Other product characteristics: worries about delivery system, dual-protection, no side effects

There is a critical lack of market research data available to the HIV prevention and MPT fields, including segmentation strategies and value propositions. However, a number of relevant end-user focused projects have recently been initiated that will begin to fill identified research gaps.

Target Product Profile (TPP)
MPT TPPs have been developed for intravaginal rings (IVRs) [long-acting topical] and long-acting injectables (ultra-long-acting systemic). TPPs for daily oral and on-demand, intermediate acting are still under discussion.

CONCLUSION

The IMPT will continue to expand the SEF to include additional geographies and will update the SEF as the HIV prevention and MPT fields evolve. The IMPT will advocate for increased market research to support successful HIV prevention product and MPT development and introduction and will continue to facilitate field-wide collaborations to reduce duplication of effort and maximize public health impact.

Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) are an innovative class of sexual and reproductive health prevention products that deliver HIV prevention, other sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention, and contraception in varied combinations. Condoms are the only currently available option to prevent the simultaneous risks of HIV, other STIs, and unintended pregnancy. While condoms are important, they are not enough. Women need more options that suit the circumstances of their daily lives.

There are nearly a dozen MPTs in clinical trials, with many other innovative technologies in earlier stages of development, including:

- Longer-acting vaginal rings
- Injectables that combine contraception & infection prevention
- Innovative gels
- Fast dissolving films and inserts

Effective, affordable, and widely available MPTs would save lives and improve the health of women & their families across the globe.

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