



Newsletter
October 2023

Choice for HIV Prevention for MEN

Welcome to the first MOBILE MEN internal newsletter. We will send this every three months to give study members updates on progress. Please send any photos or news items that you would like us. Also, please send to any stakeholders who may be interested.

A brief introduction to MOBILE MEN

MOBILE MEN is a new HIV prevention study running in East and Southern Africa from 2023 to 2026. For the first time, it is evaluating LA-CABOTEGRAVIR in men who are mobile for work. We will recruit from locations known to be where men who are mobile for work can be found. This includes fishermen, farm labourers, truck drivers, long distance taxi drivers, casual workers etc. Although the work takes place in Uganda and South Africa, we are linked to HIV prevention programmes across sub-Saharan Africa and hope to make our findings generalisable to the region.



Fishermen help shape goals and activities for research in men. Photo Credit: EDCTP

Rapid Assessment Phase

Preparation for the study includes a Rapid Assessment phase to identify key risk groups of men, optimise engagement and develop the clinical trial with the needs of MOBILE MEN prioritised. This work is due to start November 2023. Repeat rapid assessments will occur throughout the programme.

The MOBILE MEN Study

We will carry out a mixed method, multi-setting, open-label randomized study involving 400 HIV negative men who are mobile for work in East London and KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and in Masaka in Uganda. Men will be randomized 1:1 to either oral TDF-FTC PrEP (event-driven or daily) or to injectable PrEP (CAB-LA) over 9 months. After 9 months, all men will be offered the choice of PrEP (oral TDF-FTC or injectable CAB-LA) for a further 9 months, with the ability to change PrEP option as often as they wish. Recruitment is expected to begin in April 2024.

Here are some thoughts from our MOBILE MEN team:

Clinical science

“Finally, a study that will provide choice of HIV prevention options for heterosexual men in Africa!”

Dr Eugene Ruzagira

Social science

“We will talk men to understand their knowledge and perceptions of disease and ill-health (including HIV), HIV prevention methods (including PrEP), and understanding of risk for HIV infection. We will investigate men’s perception of their candidacy for PrEP and willingness to participate in the study. We will use rapid ethnographic assessment methods, as well as in depth interviews and group discussions.”

Professor Janet Seeley

Implementation science

“Despite effective and freely available HIV testing, antiretroviral therapy and oral PrEP, new HIV infections continue to occur in South Africa. We have found that young mobile men are a vulnerable key population who struggle to engage with interventions. We therefore hope that mobile men will provide the evidence to inform scale up of effective biomedical HIV prevention for Mobile Men.”

Professor Maryam Shahmanesh

Modelling

“We will use the results of Mobile Men to assess the cost-effectiveness of oral PrEP versus Cab-LA in men. We will consider costs, life years lost and disability adjusted life years over at least a 20-year time horizon period to represent the key differences between strategies with the overall aim of recommending a specific PrEP modality for this population.”

Dr Loveleen Bansal-Matharu

Cost effectiveness

“Injectable PrEP is a true game changer - or it could be if we get demand and supply right, right from the start. Mobile Men is a chance to collect very early data on demand and resource use for injectable PrEP, to turn into the cost and cost-effectiveness estimates that we know from experience are pivotal for catalysing policy in South Africa. That we get to do so in the painfully underserved population of men who are mobile for work, is an added bonus.”

Dr Gesine Meyer-Rath

Training

We have a dedicated knowledge exchange programme to improve capacity in all institutions using expertise both within and external to the consortium. For questions contact Emily Webb, Emily.Webb@lshtm.ac.uk

More information contact: Julie Fox, MOBILE MEN Project Director, julie.fox@kcl.ac.uk and Sophie Lam, Project Manager, Sophie.lam@kcl.ac.uk