



Press Release

December 1, 2011

Women for Positive Action discuss the impact of recent research on the sexual transmission of HIV in women

To mark World AIDS Day (December 1, 2011), Women for Positive Action has released a commentary which discusses recent and ongoing research on prevention strategies for the sexual transmission of HIV. With expert opinion from Teresa Branco, Margaret Johnson, Karine Lacombe, Anne-Mette Lebech, Mona Loutfy, Angelina Namiba, Maria Jesús Pérez Elías and Sharon Walmsley, the article is focused on the potential clinical relevance of these studies. Women for Positive Action is led by a coalition of healthcare professionals, women living with HIV and community representatives from across Europe, Canada and Latin America. The group is committed to exploring the issues that face women with HIV and those involved in their care. The full article can be accessed at <http://www.womenforpositiveaction.org/prevention-strategies-for-the-sexual-transmission-of-HIV/>

“Women are one of the fastest growing population groups at risk for HIV infection but research among this group is limited. Recent research has focussed on reducing sexual transmission of HIV; these studies are of particular interest for those involved in the care of women at risk of HIV e.g. women with an HIV-positive partner. It is important that we highlight this research and encourage additional studies to address the many challenges facing women at risk of HIV” said Dr Mona Loutfy, Associate Professor at the University of Toronto, and Infectious Diseases Specialist and Clinician Scientist at Women’s College Hospital, Toronto, Canada.

Women for Positive Action is committed to raising awareness of the need to bridge the existing research gaps with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of women living with HIV.

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Note to Editors

Globally an estimated 33 million people are living with HIV. Women make up about 50% of HIV cases and a higher proportion of new diagnoses compared with men. This means that the share of HIV infection among women is increasing in several countries. Young women, in sub-Saharan Africa, aged 15–24 are three to four times more likely to become infected than young men (UNAIDS, 2009). The most common mode of infection is by heterosexual transmission and most women with HIV are of childbearing potential. Furthermore, women with HIV are more likely to present at a later stage of HIV infection than men.

Although women represent 50% of people living with HIV globally and are one of the fastest growing population groups at risk for HIV infection, relatively little research has looked at women-specific issues, and women only account for about 20% of participants in clinical trials of HIV to date. As part of its mission Women for Positive Action aims to raise awareness around recent and ongoing studies that focus on women. Visit the multilingual website www.womenforpositiveaction.org for further information about Women for Positive Action and ongoing projects. Women for Positive Action is supported by a grant from Abbott.

References

UNAIDS 2009, <http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp>

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