



Press Release

March 8, 2014

Women for Positive Action celebrates International Women's Day 2014 by launching new educational tool on '*HIV and young women*'

Empowering those involved in HIV care to support girls as they develop into young women

In conjunction with International Women's Day (March 8, 2014), a practical and educational tool on the topic of young women living with HIV has been developed by Women for Positive Action (a global, multidisciplinary group of experts committed to addressing the specific concerns of women living with HIV). This tool is designed to inspire community and healthcare representatives to tackle the evolving challenges and support the needs of girls living with HIV as they develop into young women (available for download - <http://bit.ly/1c9GpGV>).

"Young women aged 15-24 are particularly vulnerable to HIV, with infection rates twice as high as in young men. Unfortunately, gender inequalities, discrimination and lack of adequate targeted services often mean that these women fail to receive the services and support they need" explains Angelina Namiba, Project Manager for Positively UK and Women for Positive Action faculty member.

In line with this year's International Women's Day theme of '*Inspiring change*', Women for Positive Action faculty members, Lorraine Sherr, Mona Loutfy, Karine Lacombe and Angelina Namiba have designed the '*HIV and Young Women*' tool to help motivate those caring for young women to look for new ways to assist them through their journey into adulthood and support them to lead full and productive lives. Emotional wellbeing, including depression, and anxiety, is just one of the challenges addressed. This can affect more than 60% of those with perinatally acquired HIV specifically, and 30-60% of women living with HIV overall^{1,2}; however peer, parent and teacher support are associated with better emotional health outcomes.³ Other topics covered include sexual health and relationships as well as stigma and disclosure, with examples of how community-based initiatives and counselling approaches can support girls as they develop into young women and transition to adult care.

"Young women born with HIV are surviving into adulthood and beyond and often have complex medical and psychological needs that should be managed appropriately to ensure ongoing participation of women in their own care and prevention of HIV transmission" explains Karine Lacombe, associate professor in the infectious and tropical diseases department of Saint-Antoine Hospital (AP-HP), France and Women for Positive Action faculty member. "Transition from paediatric to adult services, in particular, is a critical time for

young women, and it is essential that the multi-disciplinary team support women to develop strong self-management and life skills in order to improve their outcomes”.

Women for Positive Action are committed to exploring and addressing the challenges faced by women living with HIV and those involved in their care. For more information visit the website, www.womenforpositiveaction.org and keep up to date with Women for Positive Action activities through Twitter [@WFPA_HIV](https://twitter.com/WFPA_HIV).

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Notes to Editor

Worldwide, over 60% of all young people (i.e. those aged 15-24 years) living with HIV are young women.⁴ Infection rates in this group are twice as high as in young men, and account for 22% of all new infections.⁵ However, with effective treatment many girls who acquired HIV perinatally are now living well into adulthood⁶ and those acquiring HIV in adulthood have a near normal life expectancy.⁷

Visit www.womenforpositiveaction.org for further information about Women for Positive Action and ongoing projects. Women for Positive Action is an educational program funded by AbbVie. All content is independently generated by the Women for Positive Action faculty experts reflecting their knowledge and opinions.

References

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