

WHAT'S UP?

2009 TALK SHOWS

HIV & AIDS

City Campus
27 May 2009

Unplanned Pregnancy

Ritson Campus
29 July 2009

Substance Abuse

City Campus
19 August 2009

NB: DATES SUBJECT TO
CHANGE PENDING
AVAILABILITY OF VENUES

For more information please
call the centre on (031) 373
2260/2320

GUESS WHO'S BIRTHDAY??

OZIEL: Energetic, outspoken, passionate about his work. Kind and very sensitive. A man who laughs a lot is dangerous, shame he's already taken.

NTUTHU: So withdrawn and humble. A smile doesn't leave her face, but your pocket is never safe with her, she'll have your last cent, extremely business minded!!

THOBILE: Humble, respectable, open and so determined. Think properly before saying anything to her. No nonsense, always speaks her mind.

NOZIPHO: You must know God with this woman who always sees the good in people. Ever happy!!

STI/Condom Week

The HIV/AIDS Centre (Midlands Campus) recently held an STI/condom week where condoms and information pamphlets about HIV/AIDS were given to students. Informal discussions surrounding STI's and HIV were held at the Riverside Site. The students showed a positive response and participation by asking questions.

A suggestion box has been mounted at the VCT Centre and students are encouraged to use it should they have any queries or suggestions about HIV/AIDS.



DUT Condotainer's Installation@PMB

The HIV/AIDS Centre at the Durban University of Technology in the Midlands has recently installed 11 condotainers throughout the campus, including residences. This is aimed at decreasing the rate of HIV infection and to prevent unwanted pregnancies amongst students. The condotainers were installed in residence foyers so that they are easily accessible to students. The condotainers are refilled up every Friday.



HIV & AIDS Centre forming Partnerships with Student Organisations

The Durban University of Technology's HIV & AIDS Centre recently joined forces with student organisations to encourage them to become role models for other students.

By student leaders utilising the HIV & AIDS centre, this is hoped to encourage other students to actively participate in HIV & AIDS issues.

The HIV&AIDS Centre wants to encourage more people to conduct their research around HIV issues. When student leaders were asked what they would like to see done around HIV & AIDS awareness, they mentioned that they would like to see more campaigns being done on all campuses. They also said that the more students get involved in these campaigns, the easier it will be to target other students to participate.

The students also raised the issue that there is a lack of knowledge and fear among students when it comes to HIV & AIDS issues. They said that the first years, especially at residences, need to be informed at an early stage about the disease.

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vaginal microbicide may prevent male-to-female sexual transmission of HIV infection. Both products were shown to be safe as tested. It was also a major achievement that 94% of participants in the MTN trial were motivated to complete the trial. We extend our thanks to all the women in the trial for their contribution to clinical research. MDP's Phase III trial of PRO 2000, involving 9389 women and currently testing 0.5% PRO 2000 gel against placebo only, is due to complete follow-up in August and announce results toward the end of 2009. Together, clinical information from these two trials will give a more robust estimate of the true impact PRO 2000 could have on the transmission of HIV infection. We are committed to a research programme to find a safe and effective microbicide for women and thank participants in the MDP trial for their ongoing support.

Facing the Challenges

Amar Singh, Acting Senior Director: Student Services and Development

Challenges facing the battle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic are not only restricted to the availability of resources or the Government's ability to introduce and effectively manage new programmes to combat the disease. It is also the personal challenges that we all face in dealing with our attitudes and beliefs and how we manage our emotions emanating from such attitudes. Our behaviours are obviously a result of such emotions. All of us in our own little way have a role to play in this battle and what we do has a significant impact on how this battle unfolds. We can either sit back and say HIV & AIDS is far away from me and does not concern me or we can say HIV & AIDS does affect me and I have a responsibility to become involved.

As members of the DUT community we enjoy a special and powerful position to make a difference in the lives of all those who belong to the university. We all cannot and may not wish to be HIV & AIDS counsellors but we have an obligation to be better informed about the pandemic. We all have a responsibility to become activists against this disease if we are to contain its impact on our communities. It is easy to become an informed activist. There are numerous opportunities on our campus to obtain information and advice on HIV & AIDS. Such resources include the HIV & AIDS Centre, the Student Clinic, the Student Counselling Centre, the EAP desk, fellow colleagues and students. It is the collective action of every individual that will ensure success against this disease.

Our testing programmes and awareness campaigns go a long way towards keeping people informed. However, for us to maximise our efforts we need to become creative and inclusive in our strategies of keeping people better informed. For this reason it is critical that we strive to infuse our curriculum with HIV & AIDS information. Various programmes have been held to achieve this and it has made an impact. These initiatives will be intensified in the ensuing year as it is obvious that the classroom is a very powerful place to change attitudes and behaviour. The medium for change is the lecturer who is held in high esteem and who also holds the attention of the student.



This, in my opinion, is the special role that our lecturers play. Other staff at the university also play a significant role in guiding and supporting our students. As a member of the Student Services Division or the Administrative Division you also have a role to play, as in your interactions with students and staff, speaking with conviction and authority about HIV & AIDS will ensure that the battle against the disease will be prioritised.



American actress and singer Jurnee Smollet, shares her experiences on HIV & AIDS during an information sharing discussion organised by the HIV & AIDS centre. Students and peer educators asked questions and gave Jurnee the South African perspective on issues regarding HIV & AIDS.

We are Warriors of Change

Bhekani Dlamini

American actress and singer, Jurnee Smollet, shared her experience with Durban University of Technology (DUT) counsellors and peer educators during an information sharing discussion on HIV/AIDS at the Steve Biko Campus. She was excited to get first hand information about the South African situation on HIV/AIDS, instead of simply reading about it.

Smollet has been to a few countries in Africa speaking about her experience in HIV/AIDS awareness. She has presented a number of peer education talks in schools on how HIV/AIDS affects one's life. When you personalise HIV, you change the face of it. She is convinced that young people are influenced by the way their role models do things, either negative or positive.

Staff member from Student Counselling and Health, Oziel Mdletshe told delegates at a Round Table discussion that DUT has embarked on a peer education programme as a way of talking to students. He said young people interact with each other on campus and at residences. He said young people interact easily in an environment where they are free to talk. He said he has realised behaviour

and attitude change among students after holding peer education awareness workshops. He said peer educators are expected to reach out to other students.

He was impressed with the positive response and the impact peer education has on young people.

Smollet said she was worried that the wrong impression is conveyed in terms of how America is dealing with HIV/AIDS. She said that AIDS is the

HEAIDS Communication Workshop

The Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS) recently held a communication workshop for all higher education institutions.

The workshop was the second sector communication initiative facilitated by HEAIDS. The intention was to build on the previous successful engagement held with higher education communications personnel last year.

The purpose of the workshop was to update institutions regarding key programme outputs and to discuss and review proposed communication guidelines for use by higher education institutions. These guidelines have been developed in response to the recommendations of the previous workshop, and were intended to support both the overall communication strategy of the HEAIDS Programme and institutional communication needs.

Effective and appropriate communication regarding HIV/AIDS issues at sector and institutional levels is seen as critical to the achievement of a co-ordinated and comprehensive higher education response to the epidemic.

The HEAIDS communication strategy recognises the dual role of HEAIDS in supporting both sector and institutional responses and is based on three main components:

- **Systemic communication:** This focuses on the need for regular, sustained communication to entities within the higher education sector and media relations.
- **Social advocacy:** This relates to the fact that HEAIDS conceptualises responses for the sector and has to be able to persuade other key stakeholders to take action.
- **Enabling communication:** The strategy looks at a few simple interventions that might strengthen AIDS-related communication on campuses. This includes a collection of communication guidelines that focus mainly on communication campaigns for behaviour change.

The delegates were requested to think, prepare and share the best practice or

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number one killer among young African American women in America. She was surprised to see so many advertisements about HIV/AIDS campaigns in South Africa, commenting that one rarely finds such billboards and communication in America.

In view of the many awareness campaigns which are more information based, it emerged that a comprehensive programme has to be put together to educate people about HIV/AIDS. It is believed this approach will emphasise the different ways in which HIV can be contracted. It was also acknowledged that a negative stigma still surrounds HIV and still plays a key role in discouraging people from talking about their status.

Mdletshe expressed his concern that men do not want to know their HIV/AIDS status in South Africa, adding that most only find out through their girlfriends. Smollett echoed similar sentiments saying it is common in America and she suggested that men should be mobilised to express themselves openly about their HIV/AIDS status.

Commenting on parents who do not talk about sex issues to their children, Smollett, said: "Even though the truth hurts and is uncomfortable to talk about, it needs to be told". She agreed with peer educators who suggested that HIV/AIDS should be integrated into the school curriculum at primary level. "We have got to find ways to get it into the schools," she said. She admitted she learned something during her visit to DUT as she was shocked to hear about

the traditional intervention of virginity testing.

"We are the warriors of change," said Smollett referring to peer educators, counsellors and herself in educating people about HIV/AIDS. "I feel stimulated and motivated today." She concluded that she believes she has to be the light of her own and inspire others in what she does.

Jurnee Smollett has spoken extensively on HIV/AIDS awareness and positive influences for youth. In the past year she also campaigned for President Barack Obama.

She is known for delivering heartfelt and energetic performances and her talent continues to evolve with each new project.

Smollett most recently starred in "The Great Debaters" alongside Denzel Washington, who also directed the drama, and Forest Whitaker. Produced by Oprah Winfrey, the film depicts the true story of Melvin B. Tolson (Washington), a professor at Wiley College in the Jim Crow South, who inspired four students to form the school's first debate team, becoming the first African American university to break colour barriers and eventually going on to challenge Harvard in the national championship. In addition to receiving rave reviews, the film was nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Picture and she was personally nominated for an NAACP Image Award in the category of Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture. She was also recently seen guest starring on the two-hour season finale of "Grey's Anatomy" 

Microbicides Development Programme Congratulates Microbicide Trials Network on Completion of Trial HPTN 035

The Microbicides Development Programme (MDP) congratulates the Microbicide Trials Network (MTN) on its February 9th announcement that 0.5% PRO 2000 vaginal gel has demonstrated signs of success in preventing HIV infection in a recently concluded Phase II/III clinical trial. The trial, involving 3099 women, compared each of two experimental vaginal microbicides, 0.5% PRO 2000 and BufferGel, with placebo and with no gel. The results, although not conclusive, are encouraging. HPTN 035 is the first human clinical study to find that a

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SAPIT Trial results: Integrated TB-HIV treatment strategy improves survival

CAPRISA released interim findings on survival from the SAPIT trial at a press conference at the CDC eThekweni clinic. The public release was the result of a review by the Trial Safety Monitoring Committee which recommended that the sequential arm of the trial be stopped and that the participants in this arm be commenced on antiretroviral therapy (ART).

The Starting ART in three Points In TB treatment (SAPIT) trial is a randomised open-label clinical trial which investigated the most appropriate method for treating HIV-TB co-infected individuals. The study was designed with three arms. Group 1 was an early integrated treatment arm (patients began ART soon after initiating TB treatment); Group 2 the late integrated treatment arm (patients initiated ART after intensive phase of TB therapy) and Group 3 the sequential arm (patients initiated ART on completion of TB therapy).

The study, which commenced on 28 June 2005, enrolled a total of 645 patients with its last enrollment on 11 July 2008. The Safety Monitoring Committee in its September 1st review of the study found that the mortality rate was 55% lower in the integrated arms when compared to the sequential arm. The committee therefore recommended that the sequential arm be stopped. Further to this, it recommended that all patients in this arm be contacted for initiation of ART. The data analysis, which comprised 60% of the expected follow-up time, showed that 26 patients died in the sequential arm (a mortality rate of 11.6 per 100 years) compared to 24 deaths in the combined integrated arms (mortality rate of 5.1 per 100 person-years). This reduction in mortality in the integrated treatment arms was statistically significant both in patients with CD4 counts below 200 and patients with CD4 counts from 200 to 500.

CAPRISA Director Professor Salim S. Abdool Karim said, "The study shows that integrating TB and HIV treatment and care saves lives." Dr Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS said, "These important results show that a 'two diseases, one patient, one response' integrated approach to TB/HIV treatment avoids unnecessary deaths from TB, the leading cause of death in people living with HIV in Africa." Dr Paul Nunn of the Stop TB Department at the WHO said, "The results to date clearly show the urgent necessity to make ART available to HIV infected patients with TB worldwide."

Ambassador Mark Dybul, co-ordinator of the US Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) said, "Scaling up collaborative TB/HIV activities is a priority for PEPFAR. We remain committed to increasing screening for both HIV and TB, which will allow greater numbers of patients to benefit from these study results."

Locally the findings received coverage by both SABC and eTV, including the STAR newspaper, the Sunday Tribune and the Sowetan, amongst others.

Following the advice of the safety monitoring committee the two integrated arms will continue as per protocol with the study expected to conclude in 2010. The results of SAPIT in its present form has the potential to change health policy towards treating HIV/TB co-infection both locally and internationally with its final results eagerly awaited.

Adopted from CAPRISA newsletter, September 2008, volume 7, issue 9 

Talk of "Positive Living"

By Anonymous staff member!

I sit in a little corner in my office, with papers flying all over my desk. Furniture close together, it looks so out of place - should try to rearrange it somehow. Then a bell rings, I've come to anticipate its annoying sound every second minute throughout the day, everyday. This place has become so busy and popular all of a sudden - it's alive and exciting. We're really getting a positive response more than what our infrastructure and manpower can handle. In fact by the look of things, soon we will be unable to handle the demand.

Last year we were a bit concerned that things were not going according to plan but look at us now! Before it used to be quiet, one person here and there, occasionally in groups of two or three never five or more but now they come in all kinds of groups. They heard about us through presentations, orientations and campaigns, support groups and peer education. A rumour is a very powerful tool and can be positive because there are those who come to get a certain brand of condoms (referred to them as CD's by students) that are available for free - that word is spread around by our regular visitors. They will definitely come back to do more than just collecting CD's, I am certain of that!!!

Back to the ringing bell, they enter and you can see the excitement, others indecisive, others worried if not anxious but one thing is certain, they are here to make an informed decision about their lives, change their lifestyle



and live POSITIVELY. Now, that is more important than any emotions they could be inhibiting. They are good actors/actresses because they always laugh off their worries but then questions start rolling

out as if they were rehearsed. It's then that my heart swells up, mostly with pride at what an effortless action like taking a stand can do into one's life. They usually don't know though mostly do anticipate what the results would be. They have to know, they need to know, their livelihood depends on it. Most importantly the results are their future.

You would expect them never to come back after three months as advised, but they do and in numbers - talk of positive living and positive minds!!!

These are the kids that make this job interesting. It's not that exciting - that is not important in any case. I am here to change a student's life in the smallest possible way. As are my fellow colleagues in this centre, who do more than just receive the students everyday. We are like the smallest spider's web that is growing by strength and just like the virus, POSITIVELY influencing the DUT Community to change the tide of life into POSITIVE LIVING. And just like my jumbled-up office, life is a jungle but something POSITIVE does come of it. It only takes an effortless action, TAKING A STAND AGAINST THE VIRUS AND CHANGING THE TIDE OF LIFE. It's only then that POSITIVE LIVING will take its effect. 