

CHVI Team in Social and Behavioral Research on HIV Vaccines

University of Toronto, Canada, in partnership with the Humsafar Trust, Mumbai, is implementing a five-year (2012 – 2017) multi-country research project titled '**CHVI Team in Social and Behavioral Research on HIV Vaccines**'. The CHVI Team in Social and Behavioral Research on HIV vaccines launches an expert interdisciplinary social science team in Canada, **India** and South Africa that will apply rigorous and innovative social research to accelerate the development and dissemination of safe, effective and accessible HIV vaccines. Funders for this project include: Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

Program Objectives

The overall program objectives of the proposed *CHVI Team in Social and Behavioral Research on HIV Vaccines* are:

- 1) To advance a nationally and internationally recognized, community-relevant and integrated interdisciplinary Team at the cutting edge of HIV vaccine social research;
- 2) To establish effective and exciting interdisciplinary, international HIV vaccine social research and training opportunities for trainees, postdoctoral fellows and junior investigators in order to attract and train the next generation of HIV vaccine social researchers in Canada, India and South Africa; and,
- 3) To accelerate and improve knowledge transfer of community-relevant social and biomedical HIV prevention research findings to frontline service providers, policymakers, key populations at higher risk of HIV exposure, persons living with HIV and the general public.

Project Objectives

The major objectives of the team's research program in India are:

Objective 1: To enhance comprehension of critical concepts for informed consent among vulnerable community volunteers to advance safely and ethically conducted HIV vaccine clinical trials;

Objective 2: To advance the implementation science of HIV vaccines by systematically engaging end-user preferences to guide the trajectory of HIV vaccine development. We implement innovative methodological approaches to engage communities at higher risk of HIV exposure in pre-clinical research to support evidence-informed preparedness for roll-out of future HIV vaccines.

We are currently in the second year of this project. The first project under this study (titled Project 1) is ongoing now and aims to investigate the mental models of MSM with regard to their understanding of HIV vaccine trials. This project aims to finally design a guide to assist MSM with regard to making an informed decision on participating in vaccine trials without any attempts to influence their decision toward participating in the trial.

As The Team Grant project also focuses strongly on capacity building, this project also provides support to key personnel with regard to attending and presenting at international conferences such as ICAAP and IAC.