

## **PD34 Community mobilization for research: Using community radio to create awareness of microbicide research in Soweto, South Africa.**

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### **ABSTRACT TEXT**

#### **Background:**

Community awareness and mobilization for clinical trials requires multiple approaches, of which one is radio. Radio is ubiquitous, can be listened to while performing other tasks, is inexpensive and widely available. This presentation reports on the use of a community radio program to promote awareness of the Microbicide Feasibility Study (MFS) in Soweto, South Africa.

#### **Methods:**

A one hour weekly talk show, called Tshireletso Health Talk, focusing on different themes was hosted on Jozi FM, a community radio station in Soweto. The format followed input from project staff and guests, followed by a phone-in and discussion. A wide variety of themes were discussed including microbicide research aspects (informed consent, study procedures, importance of clinic visit adherence and scheduling). A sample of 40 transcribed radio shows were coded according to the themes, and listener's calls. Of the 40 programs analyzed, the following themes were dealt with: World AIDS Day; Living Positively with HIV; Community Participation; Research processes; Microbicides; Safer sex; Sexuality; HIV Stigma; Sexually transmitted infections. Forty one calls were made to the program by listeners. Of these calls 27% related to condoms, 25% concerned HIV issues, 22% were questions about sexually transmitted infections. The remaining calls were enquiries regarding the trial procedures (12%), microbicides (10%), anal sex (2%), and menstruation (2%).

#### **Results:**

JoziFM has a wide footprint that includes Soweto and an estimated 700,000 listeners of all ages. Tshireletso Health Talk provides a means for creating awareness of the Microbicide studies to a broader audience through an entertaining advice discussion forum. Community radio may be an extremely powerful tool in spreading information about new research, the process of research, and creating a common language between researchers and research populations, and thus enhancing research literacy. Future analysis will ascertain the impact of the Tshireletso Health Talk with regard to recruitment statistics.

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