

3RD ONTARIO AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN & BLACK RESEARCH THINK TANK 2012: VALIDATING THE RESEARCH PRIORITIES SET FOR HIV RESEARCH AMONGST AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN & BLACK COMMUNITIES

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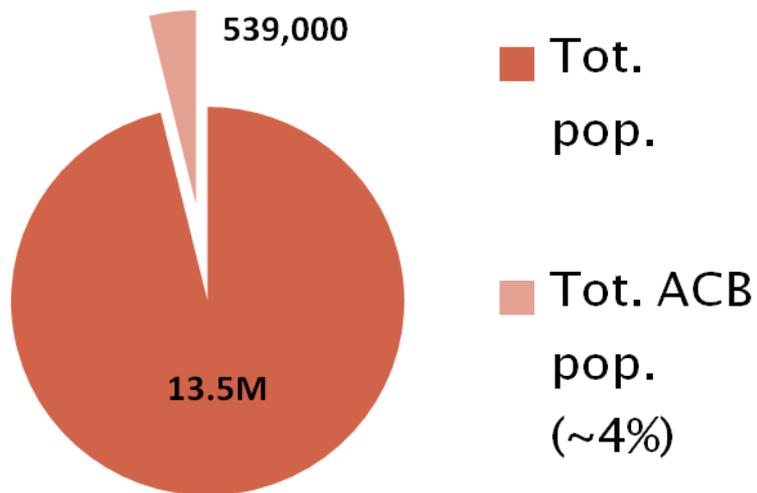


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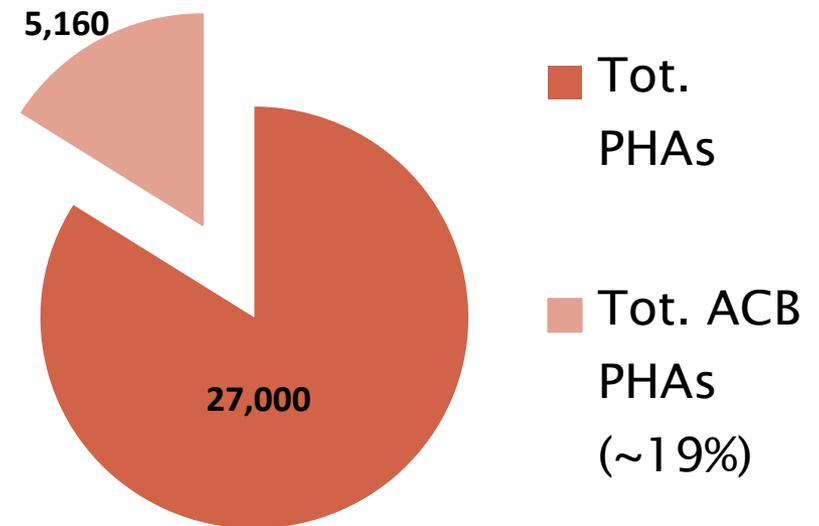
OHTN 2013 Research Conference
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Background – The Reality

Ontario Population



HIV in Ontario



Background – ACB Strategy

Ontario HIV/AIDS Strategy for ACB communities, 2013–2018

- ▶ Goal – to reduce the incidence of HIV amongst ACB people in Ontario & to improve the quality of life for those infected & affected by HIV/AIDS
- ▶ Guide to promote a timely & coordinated set of actions to address HIV issues in ACB communities
- ▶ 3rd objective – identify research needs, priorities & opportunities to inform response to HIV/AIDS in ACB communities in Ontario

Background – Research Think Tank

▶ Purpose

- Build research agenda to enhance response to HIV within ACB communities in Ontario through evidence-based approaches

▶ Objectives

- Share knowledge & info on current ongoing research
- Refine & determine new research gaps, priorities, needs & interests
- Promote & facilitate meaningful & appropriate stakeholder relationships

Methods – Research Think Tank

- ▶ Context to ground priorities:
 - Epi data on HIV amongst ACB communities in Ontario
 - Highlights on ACB populations registered in the OHTN Cohort Study (OCS)
 - Review of 2009 RTT research priorities
 - Track-specific presentations
- ▶ Priority setting discussions (30 participants)
 - Thematic priorities
 - World Café discussions
 - Research plans & Cross-Project Collaborations

Methods – Validation Process

- ▶ Purpose
 - Ensuring representation of stakeholders
 - Call for greater engagement of PHAs
 - Input for invitees unable to attend
- ▶ Data collection
 - 62 stakeholder participants
 - Discussion groups: 2 groups of PHAs & 1 with ACB Strategy Workers (42); Online survey to invitees unable to attend (16)
- ▶ Reviewed summary of RTT proceedings & priorities

Results – Research Priorities

- ▶ All priorities validated as key research areas
- ▶ Additional research issues also identified
- ▶ 9 priority cross-cutting research themes
- ▶ Cross-cutting populations

1. HIV Prevention Best Practices

From school age **to senior citizens**: measuring effectiveness of interventions at each phase of development/delivery; implications of the disconnect between perceptions of individual and community risk; role of culture in vulnerability to HIV as well as coping; **educating parents and teachers; ACB-specific messages about sexuality and drug/alcohol use; reaching individuals with special needs or disabilities; reaching sex workers; effective partnerships; community prevention campaigns.**

2. Clinical Issues across the Life Span

ACB youth transitioning to adult care to aging with HIV, including issues of treatment, care, disclosure, serodiscordant couples, prenatal transmission, pregnancy planning and motherhood, infant feeding choices, etc.; understanding and addressing the medication side effects and overall health and wellness experiences of PHAs; HIV cure research; nutrition, food security and access to cultural foods; needs of youth living with HIV-positive mothers; HIV-Associated Neurocognitive Disorder (or HAND) in ACB population.

3. Policy Analysis

Impacts of policy changes to the Immigration Act, Mental Health Act, criminalization of non-disclosure, Interim Federal Health Benefits, social assistance (ODSP and OW) and access to services; impact of organizational policies and structure of organizations working with ACB individuals; MIPA and role transitions for PHAs from volunteers to staff members; impact of cost of medications for those without drug plans; access to life insurance; access to legal aid services; employment and labour rights policies for migrant workers.

4. HIV Testing *

Impact of social determinants of health on decision-making around HIV testing; links of testing to HIV prevention; impact of couples testing on HIV prevention and relationships; provider-initiated HIV testing; HIV testing in relation to stigma, counseling approaches to HIV testing ('families'); impact of structural factors on HIV testing; the role of culture in HIV testing.

***HIV testing was identified as a top priority by a substantial number of participants of the validation process.**

5. Sexual Practices

Social epidemiology and qualitative exploratory questions of ACB youth and newcomers, serodiscordant couples, gay men and other MSM, heterosexual men, and older adults; influence of drugs and alcohol; role of culture; sexual negotiation; hyper-sexualization of young girls; development of interventions; addressing transnational sexual practices (i.e., relationships in home country and in Canada).

6. Methodological Issues

Research methodologies; challenging traditional notions of 'legitimate knowledge' and encouraging a 'bottom-up' approach to knowledge building; barriers to ACB research participation; role of culture; building capacity to critically think about research design (e.g., anticipated impacts, building on community knowledge); mobilizing and nurturing ACB communities/researchers who aren't usually engaged (especially PHAs); **misconceptions and mistrust vis-à-vis pharmaceutical companies and biomedical research; innovative methods for engaging ACB community members (e.g., online or informal/social methods, linking with trusted clinicians); translating and disseminating research findings and epidemiological data in layperson terms; mixed methods that supplement quantitative data with lived experience narratives.**

7. Stigma

Expanding notions of stigma including **internalized stigma**; intersections of violence and discrimination; **impact on HIV disclosure**; **institutionalized stigma in healthcare services industry**

8. Immune Activation

Vulnerability due to increased inflammation (immune activation).

9. Clinical Issues *

Around diagnosis, adherence, continuity of care, natural history, co-infections (e.g., herpes), etc.

*** Priority 9 incorporated into priority 2 as both relate to the treatment and care of people living with HIV throughout their life spans and throughout stages of clinical care.**

Conclusions

- ▶ Dissemination and implementation of research priorities
 - will help revitalize ACB research agenda
 - strengthen an evidence-based response to HIV/AIDS in ACB communities

- ▶ Next Steps
 - Promotion of research priorities & facilitating uptake of research amongst key stakeholders
 - Dissemination of a summary report
 - Advocate for ACB research session at conferences
 - OHTN Conference 2013 ACB Session re: ACB youth & HIV prevention interventions
 - Host forums for researchers to network and advance priorities
 - Meetings with key stakeholders to lead research projects

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Thank You/Merci!

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