

S138

2-hour Symposium

What is hot in HIV/AIDS in 2015?

HIV treatment as prevention

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In 2014, 1.6 million people were infected with HIV, mostly via sexual routes. No protective vaccine is available, and hence public preventive efforts rely on use of condoms & clean needles, male circumcision, and use of antiretroviral treatment (ART). Continued global and regional declines in mother-to-child transmission are linked with comprehensive treatment programmes of HIV+ pregnant women. ART has also dampened sexual transmission, and recent studies suggests a preventive effect of >96% per sexual intercourse in serodiscordant sexually active couples not using condoms and where the HIV+ person is on fully suppressive ART. There remain however significant challenges to control sexual transmission. Despite increasing ART coverage, increasing HIV incidence is observed in certain key-affected populations. This contra intuitive association is likely explained by a combination of insufficient HIV testing strategies and poor linking and retention in care of those already diagnosed. There is also evidence of risk decompensation in some populations. Also, in HIV+ persons early in the course of their infection, it remains uncertain whether ART provides personal in addition to transmission benefit and hence whether ART is indicated for all HIV+ persons. Finally, there are financial and political-based factors in many regions that prevent better ART coverage. Components of ART in exposed uninfected person (PrEP) reduce anal sex transmission by 80-90%, and are considered across Europe as a novel additional transmission preventive intervention in particularly vulnerable populations. Significant advances in HIV preventive science has been gained in last few years, and ART is likely the most effective of the available interventions. Pending implementation research of using this intervention may provide further advances in the next few years.