

## UPTAKE

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**BACKGROUND:** Adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) and female sex workers (FSW) in sub-Saharan Africa are vulnerable and susceptible to HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and unplanned pregnancies. End-user research that considers their needs, preferences and behaviour is critical to inform design, development, access to and uptake of long-acting HIV (LA-HIV) and multi-purpose prevention technologies (MPTs). Understanding health system and programmatic perspectives from healthcare providers (HCPs) and policymakers (PMs) is also critical towards product introduction.

**STUDY RATIONALE:** High impact product development approaches for low- and middle-income countries must consider the needs, preferences and behaviours of end-users, PMs and HCPs in early stages of development. This study seeks to assess the behavioural determinants or uptake of marketed LA contraceptive and existing HIV LA-PrEP products in Kenya and Uganda as part of a package of screening, prophylactic and contraceptive options, to inform the product development of novel LA HIV prevention products and MPTs. Given the generally high adherence to LA contraceptives administered either as injectables or implants, the UPTAKE study hypothesis is that uptake of and adherence to LA HIV products can be enhanced if they are provided as MPTs and as part of a package of self-care products.

**OBJECTIVES:** (i) To understand determinants of uptake and access of current and future LA-HIV and MPTs to prevent HIV and unwanted pregnancies and (ii) to measure strength and segmentation of preferences for product formulation, device, delivery and packaging.

**METHODS:** The study will utilize behavioural research approaches with FSWs, AGYW, PMs and HCPs. A four-staged mixed method study: **Stage 1:** Formative research involving in-depth interviews (IDIs) with end users (30 AGYW and 30 FSW), and with key informants (10 HCP and 10 PM) to explore preferences in terms of feasibility and affordability; **Stage 2:** Market Segmentation and Behavioural Intervention Design, involving quantitative and qualitative Simulated Behavioural Experiments (SBEs), Discrete Choice Experiments (DCEs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and IDIs to measure segmentation of preferences across different user profiles (420 AGYW and 280 FSW); **Stage 3:** Design and evaluation of an intervention (440 AGYW and 440 FSW); and **Stage 4:** Cost-effectiveness modelling of products and intervention. This poster focuses only on Stages 1 and 2.

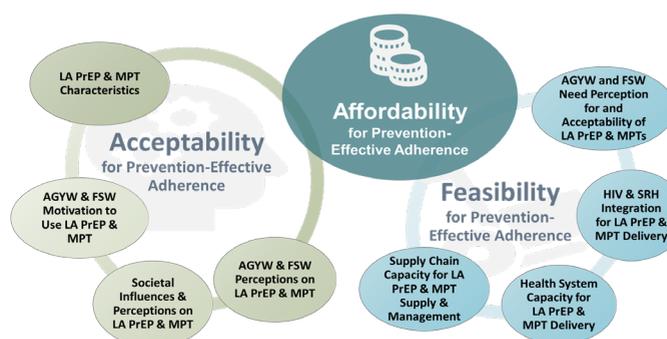


Figure 1. UPTAKE Conceptual Framework

**CURRENT STATUS:** The UPTAKE study began in November 2020; and the study protocol was approved by all IRBs in September 2021. Community engagement and identification of sites has been completed. IDIs with AGYW, FSW, HCP and PM for Stage 1 are ongoing in both countries. As part of capacity strengthening the study is supporting four African postgraduate students (2 PhDs, 2 MScs) who are working under the project at KAVI-ICR and MUL under the academic leadership of LSHTM.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES:** An understanding of individual and contextual factors that influence use of existing and future LA-HIV and MPT from Stage 1. Individual-level preferences and the impact of preference heterogeneity from Stage 2. These outcomes will inform the design of stages 3 and 4 whose expected outcomes will be an understanding of the effectiveness of the alternate design/interventions and strategies, using marketed LA contraceptive products as proxies for LA HIV prevention products in development and an estimation of the cost of retention interventions and the cost effectiveness of products and delivery methods.

**ANTICIPATED IMPACT:** Several HIV prevention products currently in early research and development are poised to incorporate these study results to ensure they are designed, developed and delivered with the fewest barriers to access and greatest potential for adherence and impact.