

## Public Health in the News

### WHO 'pre-qualifies' new HIV/syphilis combo test

Alere, a global leader in rapid diagnostics, announced that Alere SD BIOLINE HIV/Syphilis Duo test has been awarded World Health Organisation (WHO) pre-qualification, making it the first dual HIV/syphilis point-of-care test available for public sector procurement in resource-limited countries.

#### Eliminating mother-to-child transmission

With WHO prequalification, global health organisations such as PEPFAR, UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria can now deploy the HIV/Syphilis Duo test in national screening programmes, targeting those in greatest need. Utilisation of the test will be focused on screening pregnant women for HIV and syphilis and linking those infected to care, in support of WHO's goal of eliminating mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of these serious diseases...



#### Transmission of HIV and syphilis

Globally, 1.4 million pregnant women have active syphilis and almost 1.5 million pregnant women are HIV infected. Both HIV and syphilis can be transmitted during pregnancy to the foetus. Additionally, syphilis infection during pregnancy increases the risk of mother-to-child HIV transmission by 180%. In sub-Saharan Africa, 260,000 African children are infected with HIV each year.

Mother-to-child transmission occurs through pregnancy, labour, delivery and breast feeding. In fact, breast-feeding alone increases the risk of MTCT by 12% to 43%. Maternal syphilis infection can cause stillbirth, neonatal death,

prematurity, low birth weight or congenital syphilis. The impact of maternal syphilis can be prevented by testing early in pregnancy, treating seropositive pregnant women, and preventing re-infection.

Forty percent of pregnant women living with HIV have not received anti-retrovirals to reduce mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy. Without any intervention, up to 45% of infants born to mothers living with HIV will become infected. In 2014, WHO and key partners published guidance on and recommendations for the dual elimination of mother-to-child transmission of syphilis and HIV, and a framework for countries to monitor progress and validate success.

Sources: *Health24, 10 November 2015*

**WAMTechnology** is a provider of technological solutions and specialist engineering services in both the health and water sectors. One of the important electronic health registers that we have helped develop and continue to support, is the TIER.Net system (previously known as the HIV eRegister).

## TIER.Net

It captures data elements and resulting indicators (based on the WHO paper registers) required to monitor HIV and ART services. Monthly and quarterly reports can be generated, with data encrypted dispatch files transferred to higher management levels (e.g. provinces or national) for further analysis. The system also supports WHO reports, such as: WHO Cohort and WHO Cross Sectional Monthly Reports.

The TIER.Net software can also export data and cohort reports to MS Excel. Data can be exchanged between the TIER.Net software and external software tools using a modified version of the HICDEP (HIV Cohorts Data Exchange Protocol) format. TIER.Net can also import data from EMR (Electronic Medical Record) systems if they export data in the relevant format.

TIER.Net is a facility based patient management system implemented throughout South Africa and has also been implemented in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Sudan.

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