

For Immediate Release
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PRESS RELEASE

New research highlights unprecedented progress in preventing HIV as part of a new public health intervention targeting countries in Eastern and Southern Africa

--- Studies show high quality VMMC can be implemented effectively and at scale ---

A new collection of research studies, featured in the leading open access medical journals PLOS ONE and PLOS Medicine and funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, provides evidence from five African countries that safe, high quality voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) services performed by trained healthcare professionals in low resource settings can be implemented and sustained at scale and has the potential to significantly prevent new HIV infections in adolescent and adult men.

The journal supplement within which these articles appear is a collaborative effort between USAID, MCHIP, Jhpiego, R2P, PSI Zimbabwe, CDC, OGAC, DoD, and BMGF. The entire supplement can be viewed [here](#).

The new PLOS collection, *Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision for HIV Prevention: Improving Quality, Efficiency, Cost Effectiveness, and Demand for Services during an Accelerated Scale-Up*, documents the application of preliminary findings into a program aimed to circumcise 20.3 million boys and men in 14 priority countries. Estimates from UNAIDS and PEPFAR in 2011 demonstrate that if these targets are achieved by 2016, it is possible that 3.4 million new HIV infections will be prevented, saving the lives of thousands of men, women and children and averting over \$16 billion in medical treatment costs in over 15 years. As of the end of 2013, PEPFAR has supported countries in eastern and southern Africa to perform more than 4.7 million VMMC services for HIV prevention.

The papers published under the PLOS Collection summarize many of the lessons learned during the accelerated scale-up of VMMC as several countries have moved to high volume VMMC services. As the findings point out, providing VMMC services offers a unique opportunity to reach men as never before, and often for the first time in their lives, with critical sexual and reproductive health services and to link them with HIV care and treatment when necessary.

VMMC also represents a unique opportunity to reach men with other HIV services including HIV testing, counseling and linkages to care and treatment. Linking HIV-infected men who are diagnosed in VMMC clinic to HIV care and treatment will improve survival and lower viral load, potentially decreasing onward transmission. A programmatic experience in **Lesotho** demonstrates that the introduction of VMMC can dramatically increase uptake of HIV testing, counseling and ART among men if referrals are well coordinated.

The PLOS Collection is a joint collaboration between publishers, PLOS ONE and PLOS Medicine, as well as PEPFAR through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. USAID and CDC implementing partners as well as local partners at the Ministries of Health in Lesotho, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe also contributed to this Collection.

For more information, visit PLOS.org or contact Dr. Virgile Kikaya, Jhpiego/Lesotho (virgile.kikaya@Jhpiego.org).