

Research

What are we doing? The research of Evidence for Action is focused in India, Malawi, Uganda and Zambia, which represent different faces of the epidemic. The consortium also has strong research collaborations in several other countries which form a secondary network; these include Tanzania, Ukraine, Kenya and South Africa. The research is organised in four key themes:

- What 'package' of HIV treatment and care services should be provided in different settings?
- What delivery systems should be used in different contexts?
- How best should HIV treatment and care be integrated into existing health and social systems?
- How best can new evidence from research be rapidly translated into new policies and actions?

Work carried out so far

Generation of high quality, policy relevant research findings

In themes 1 (What 'package' of treatment and care services should be provided in different settings?) and 2 (How should HIV treatment and care services be delivered?), we have worked on 16 Evidence for Action-generated and 24 Evidence for Action-related projects over the last year. The main areas of work in these two themes have been: Access to care and the roll-out of HIV treatment and care ; Needs of specific population sub-groups, including children, adolescents, older people and refugees ; Mental health; Monitoring and Evaluation of HIV treatment programmes ; Missed opportunities in Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) programmes ; and Living with ART .

In theme 3 (How best should HIV treatment be integrated into existing health and social systems?), we have worked on 9 Evidence for Action-generated and 2 Evidence for Action-related projects during this period, mainly in the areas of: Integration of HIV treatment and care into the health system ; Integration of HIV and Tuberculosis services ; Integration of HIV treatment and prevention ; and Integration into social systems .

In theme 4 (How best can new evidence from research be rapidly translated into new policies and actions?), we have worked on 4 Evidence for Action-generated projects.

Many of these projects involve multiple Evidence for Action-partners, and the Research Communities of Practice have helped guide and coordinate work within the consortium.

15 peer-reviewed journal articles have been published; a further 11 are in press or under review. Evidence-based influence on policy and practice related to HIV treatment and care in low and middle income countries

We have continued to build relationships with key stakeholders in order to influence policy and practice. For example, at the international level, we have been successful in interesting WHO in our work on TB/HIV integration to the extent that they have co-funded us to do a systematic review on this topic that will be a background paper for the First Global Symposium on Health Systems Research. Our communications activities (including policy briefs, workshops, conferences, meetings, media work and other activities) focus on achieving this output.

Increased capacity of partner institutions in doing research and its effective communication

Many capacity strengthening activities have taken place, including cross-partner training for non-social scientists on qualitative research methods, and the start of work on a manual based on this training, which will be of use to stakeholders beyond Evidence for Action. Activities have also taken place in partners funded through 8 capacity strengthening grants, which have been used for workshops, courses, visits to other institutions and other activities. Other capacity strengthening activities have included PhDs and MScs, courses, and internships.

What is the impact of the research programme so far?

Many of our research projects are done in partnership with key stakeholders such as Ministries of Health and/or local NGOs, increasing the probability of findings influencing policy and practice. For example, the home-based care study is already helping home-based care organisations in Zambia to review how they train volunteers, while in Malawi several Evidence for Action-related projects (including use of Electronic Data Systems, and PMTCT M&E tools) are already influencing policy and practice. The capacity of all partners to generate and communicate research has also been significantly strengthened.