EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES AND PRACTICES: CATALYSING POSITIVE CHANGE FOR ADOLESCENTS IN AFRICA

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Assistant Professor Elona Toska and Dr Mona Ibrahim

University of Cape Town and University of Oxford
YOUTH ARE NOT A HOMOGENOUS GROUP

- Evidence-based collaborations for impact supports a unique understanding of youth and their priorities
- Engagement and inclusion are a cornerstone to comprehensive policies that for universal health coverage and accessible social assistance
[@Elona Toska] - is this visual okay to kick off the presentation or is the one on different AGYW risks better?
BUILDING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT SAFE TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD
INCREASING CHALLENGES...

AIDS-affected

COVID impacts

Family violence

Sexual violence & exploitation

Poverty

School dropout

Low SRH service access

HIV-infection risk

Cousins, 2020; Bekker, 2020; Hader et al 2021, Hillis et al 2014
INCREASING CHALLENGES...

FINANCIAL INSECURITY & LACKING BASIC NECESSITIES

"...Some of them sleep with an empty stomach in their home. It's kind of hurtful because no one can support them..."

(23, Male, Eastern Cape)

BEYOND WHAT MONEY CAN BUY: LOCKDOWN, STORES AND SOCIAL SERVICES

"This quarantine is killing us badly. Look, my girlfriend is pregnant and it is very hard to find the clothes of the baby. Even the food of the baby, it's going to be hard to find because it's going to end in the store. I'm in that situation too right now"

(23, Male, Eastern Cape)
...AND INCREASING OPPORTUNITY

- More than 3000 new initiatives with spending up 270% on social protection

Evolution in number of countries/territories and social protection measures
YOUTH-FRIENDLY SYSTEMS: THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRATED CARE

% probabilities of secondary transmission risk (viremia & sexual risk taking)

- None: 4%, 16%
- Inequitable relationships: 7%, 24%
- Hunger: 8%, 26%
- Substance use: 9%, 28%
- Sexually infected: 11%, 33%
- All factors: 77%, 89%

Toska, Zhou, Laurenzi, Haghighat, Saal, Gulaid & Cluver, 2021, AIDS.
Girls who were not in school at baseline (25.6% of full sample)

SOUTH AFRICA
Adolescent girls and you women living with HIV

Adherence to ART
+24.8%
(9.3% → 40.3%)

No missed clinic appointments
+17.7%
(3.6% → 31.9%)

No treatment interruptions
+27.6%
(11.9% → 43.2%)

No TB
+22.1%
(5.2% → 39.0%)

Toska, Zhou, Laurenzi, Saal & Cluver (analyses in progress)
No early pregnancy
78% → 95%
(17% points, 95% CIs: 6; 28)

No child marriage
78% → 93%
(16% points, 95% CIs: 4; 27)

Literacy (out of 100%)*
51% → 56%
(5% points, 95% CIs: 0; 11)

Numeracy (out of 100%)*
37% → 45%
(8% points, 95% CIs: 3; 13)

Education enrolment
41% → 67%
(27% points, 95% CIs: 15; 39)

No evidence of association:
- Not underweight
- Very good health
- Knowledge about fertility
- Knowledge about STIs
- <3hrs per day on domestic tasks
- >4hrs per day in paid work

Rudgard, Dzumbunu, Toska, Stockl et al (in review) .
EQUAL ACCESS TO CARE AND MEDICATION FOR HIV TREATMENT: RECOGNISING UNSEEN THREATS

Identify adolescents at high risk of ART non-adherence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEADSS</th>
<th>HEADSS+</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing violence at home or school</td>
<td>Medication side-effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of depression</td>
<td>Low social support from family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being sexually active</td>
<td>Parents not knowing about HIV+ status</td>
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Siyanai Zhou, Elona Toska, Lucie Cluver (under review)
EVIDENCE BASED LINKAGES AND REFERRALS THROUGH COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Ensure community healthcare workers address harmful social norms promoting positive attitudes towards education and school progression including improving access for out-of-school adolescents.

Confidential and youth-friendly health services that can respond to sexual violence and GBV and link to relevant support systems and legal entities.

Psychosocial support through links to mental health services, caregivers and positive parenting, peer support groups, and mentorship.

Improve links to social assistance to address poverty and hunger in high risk populations and people living with HIV (including adolescents living in HIV-affected households and HIV orphans).

Increase efforts to reach high-risk adolescents and children including those living in poverty, discrimination, and affected by humanitarian crises. This includes integrated community-based screening and awareness services.
THANK YOU.

Elona.Toska@uct.ac.za
Mona.Ibrahim@spi.ox.ac.uk