

**Methods:** A cross-sectional survey of 60 VHA aged 18 years and above who attended a 2-day training in September 2014, prior to implementing HBI in 40 churches in southeast Nigeria. Participants completed a 10-item single-answer questionnaire that assessed knowledge of Ebola epidemiology, symptoms, transmission, prevention practices, treatment and survival. Answers to the core questions were analyzed and reviewed with participants who subsequently scheduled presentations to their congregation.

**Findings:** 59 of the 60 VHA in attendance during the 2-day training completed the survey (Response Rate=98%). Participants mean age was 41.21 years. A majority of participants were females (76%), resided in rural areas (56%), were college-educated (61%), employed (73%) and married (80%). Average score for participants was 7 out of 10. Scores varied from less than 50% (6/59) to above 80% (23/59). Only 44% of participants knew the correct duration before symptoms can be seen in infected patients. A majority of participants correctly identified hand washing as the best way to prevent Ebola (92%); however, 47% believed there is an Ebola vaccine.

**Interpretation:** This study shows that VHAs from rural and hard to reach areas of Nigeria can be brought together to assess infectious disease knowledge and identify gaps in knowledge. By reviewing answers to the questions with the VHAs, they were quickly prepared for rapid dissemination of infectious disease information to their communities.

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### **The positive living with HIV (POLH) study: A project for the longitudinal assessment of risk behaviors and health outcomes among HIV-positive individuals in Nepal**

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**Program/Project Purpose:** Scaling up of antiretroviral therapy has dramatically improved the life-span of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) globally. However, for a complex array of reasons, the prevalence of risk behaviors such as unsafe sex, drug use, smoking, alcohol drinking, and poor dietary intake remains high, along with the heavy burden of mental health problems and co-infections. Such factors may influence health outcomes among PLWHA in syndemic ways. We thus initiated the Positive Living with HIV (POLH) Study in 2010, with the aim of improving the health status of PLWHA by addressing multiple risk behaviors and co-morbidities in Nepal, a resource-limited country in South Asia.

**Structure/Method/Design:** The POLH project goals are to: 1) measure the prevalence of risk behaviors and co-infections and examine their associations with mental health, disease progression, and mortality; and 2) design and test culturally appropriate behavior change interventions among PLWHA. To these ends, we have been collaborating with five non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with PLWHA in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. Using their networks, we recruited 322 PLWHA. NGO staff were trained to recruit, collecting data, and follow up with participants. With future grant support, we plan to expand the cohort and translate our research findings into practice.

**Outcomes & Evaluation:** We conducted baseline and 6- and 18-month follow-up surveys, with data on socio-demographics, anthropometrics,

lifestyle factors, 24-hour dietary behaviors, depression, illness history, and sexual behaviors. From collected blood samples, lipid, vitamin D, selenium, zinc, and C-reactive protein (CRP) levels were assessed, in addition to testing for hepatitis C virus (HCV), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and liver functioning at baseline and 18-month follow-up. Additionally, we tested the effectiveness of a theory-based sexual risk reduction intervention. Monitoring of disease progression is ongoing. At baseline, we found high rates of unsafe sex (51.3%); STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhea, or syphilis: 5.3%, herpes simplex virus-2: 39.8%); HCV co-infection (43.3%); smoking (47.0%); depression (25.5%); anemia (55.8%); and 25-hydroxy vitamin D serum levels

**Going Forward:** Project continuation or expansion will depend on the availability of funding. Lack of funds will result in the measurement of limited outcome variables and missed opportunities to translate the research findings into practice.

**Funding:** University of Massachusetts-Amherst; JSPS, Japan; Waseda University; and NCGM, Tokyo.

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### **Utilizing industry assets and proactive partnering to stimulate neglected disease product development**

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**Program/Project Purpose:** Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), malaria, and tuberculosis have a devastating effect on the >1.6 billion people living in poverty worldwide. However, these diseases lack safe, affordable, and effective products needed for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment. To address this, in October 2011 the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), BIO Ventures for Global Health (BVGH), and eight biopharmaceutical companies established WIPO Re:Search.

**Structure/Method/Design:** This global Consortium accelerates the development of new drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics for NTDs, malaria, and tuberculosis by connecting the resources of biopharmaceutical companies to academic researchers with novel product discovery or development ideas. WIPO Re:Search is a voluntary endeavor open to any qualified entity, provided that they agree to abide by the Consortium's Guiding Principles. Over 90 institutions have joined WIPO Re:Search including 10 private industry, 36 academic, and 46 nonprofit or government research institutions from across the globe. As the WIPO Re:Search Partnership Hub Administrator, BVGH proactively examines Member scientists' current neglected disease research and proposes novel collaboration opportunities with other Members. BVGH also fields requests from researchers, identifies Member organizations able to fulfill these requests, and helps forge mutually beneficial collaborations with clearly-defined responsibilities and expectations.

**Outcomes & Evaluation:** BVGH has facilitated 79 research partnerships between Members, including 33 compound/compound library requests, three agreements for assistance with computational chemistry or structure-activity relationship assays, and three projects to improve the formulation of promising compounds. Members have also agreed to share confidential data and expertise through 14 separate agreements. These partnerships have resulted in candidate products advancing along the product development pipeline. Screens have identified compound hits for malaria, schistosomiasis, Chagas disease, soil-transmitted helminthiasis, and Buruli ulcer. Several of these hits have advanced to dose response assays. Other partnerships are stimulating diagnostic development for diseases including dengue, tuberculosis, and malaria.