

HEARD

all about it

Issue No. 1, 2001

The Newsletter of the Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division of the University of Natal, Durban

A Message from the Director

Welcome to the first issue of the HEARD newsletter.

In a world where there is more and more information being made available to us every day, it may seem odd to be producing yet another newsletter. The problem is that there is so much information that it is difficult to sift through it all.

The purpose of this short newsletter is to provide colleagues, friends and others with information on what we are doing. We will anchor each newsletter with a short article on an issue we consider to be interesting and important, and we will point to important developments and data sources. The newsletter will be sent out by post to those who want it in this form, but we hope the majority will be able to receive an electronic version. To this end, if you're interested in our activities and wish to continue to receive the HEARD newsletter but would prefer to receive the information in an electronic format, please let us know.

Sincerely
Alan Whiteside

About HEARD...

The Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Division (HEARD) was established in 1998 to undertake academic and applied research into the economic, development and social impacts of HIV/AIDS. HEARD also provides training workshops for professionals concerned with planning for the impacts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and organises conferences and symposia to identify ideas and strategies and review interventions to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Based at the University of Natal, in Durban, South Africa, HEARD is largely a self-supporting unit. Apart from the Director, Professor Alan Whiteside, all staff and expenses are financed from externally generated project income.

Including the Research Associates, there are effectively twelve members of staff at HEARD. Two new Research Fellows have recently been appointed, and Jeff Gow, who was previously Acting Director has now become a HEARD Research Associate along with Peter Badcock-Walters and Rose Smart. Samantha Willan is the Projects Manager, Chris Desmond, Susan Erskine and Lucinda Franklin

are Research Fellows, Gavin George is a Researcher and Madeline Freeman is the Administrator. Two positions are vacant at present – Research Director, and bookkeeper.

An article detailing many of the current HEARD Projects is included on page 2.

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Would you like to hear from us again?

This is the first issue of the quarterly HEARD Newsletter, *HEARD All About It*. The next issue will be published in September 2001. If you wish to continue receiving this Newsletter, you need do nothing. If you do not wish to receive any further mail from HEARD, please contact us at the address provided on the back page.

Project Updates

This article aims to provide a brief update of some of HEARD's ongoing (and in one case, completed) projects. Project updates will feature in this Newsletter every 6 months. However, most of our feature articles will be based on HEARD research projects.

USAID Phase II

Phase I of this project (1998-2000) funded a number of HEARD activities: the development of AIDS Briefs and Toolkits (see description below), the establishment of the Education Mobile Task Team (MTT) on HIV/AIDS, and the facilitation of planning workshops.

Phase II activities (2000-2002) will include the development of additional AIDS Briefs and Toolkits, the development of a comprehensive approach to issues around Democracy and Governance and HIV/AIDS, and a number of impact studies will be undertaken. Seed funding for the MTT will also be continued in this phase.

A further planning workshop was held in September 2000, and attracted 20 participants from 8 countries. The workshop was ground breaking in that it represented the first time that economists, members of finance and human resource government departments in Southern Africa had met to plan for HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Briefs and Toolkits

Funded by USAID, the development of these important materials is an ongoing activity at HEARD. There are currently twenty-eight AIDS Briefs, each written by an expert in the field. They offer sector-specific guide-lines and responses for various professional, commercial and industrial endeavours. A standard feature of the AIDS Briefs are the checklists which suggest innovative approaches to dealing with the issue of HIV/AIDS in a particular sector and enable operatives to plot their progress against the unique requirements of their

sphere of activity.

Toolkits are designed to provide more specific aspects of AIDS interventions and prevention activities targeted at specific government Ministries. There are eleven Toolkits, seven aimed at standard government ministries or departments, and four which are general in character, so that any given Ministry's complete Toolkit would comprise five documents: for example, the Ministry of Education Toolkit would comprise one specific document relating to issues around HIV/AIDS and Education, plus the four documents that explain and expand on the Toolkit theme (with frequent cross-references to the specific Ministry document).

All AIDS Briefs and Toolkits are available from HEARD, or via the HEARD website: www.und.ac.za/und/heard

AIDS in Prison

KC Goyer, a visiting researcher, is conducting a study of HIV/AIDS in Prisons which will form part of her dissertation. The study is based on research conducted at the Westville Medium B Prison, in Durban. See the feature article in this issue of *HEARD all about it* for further information on this project.

Bergville Project

In March 2001, HEARD Research Fellow, Chris Desmond participated in a World Vision Child Survival Project which was conducted in Bergville. Chris conducted an analysis of a Baseline Household Survey, the results of which will feed into the development of a microenterprise intervention project being introduced in an effort to reduce HIV transmission in the Bergville area.

Best Practices Manual

The first edition of the Manual *Best Practices: Company Actions on HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa* was published in February 1999.

HEARD Research Fellow, Gavin George, is currently developing a second manual, modeled on the first edition, which will focus on a review of company policies within

the KwaZulu Natal region. This project is being conducted in conjunction with the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and at present is in the pilot phase, after which the full study will be undertaken.

Cost of AIDS Care in South Africa

The Health Systems Trust has provided funding for HEARD to conduct a literature review which will identify both current research and gaps in the body of knowledge on the cost of AIDS care in South Africa. HEARD Research Fellow, Lucinda Franklin will complete this review.

Cabinet Briefings to the KZN Government

HEARD offers continued support to the KwaZulu Natal Government in the form of a dedicated post providing Cabinet Briefs and input for the Department of Health on all issues concerned with HIV/AIDS. This fruitful relationship is now in its fourth year.

Some of the more recent Cabinet Briefs submitted by HEARD include:

- The Port of Durban and its role in the spread of AIDS in KZN; and
- Education Management in the Era of HIV/AIDS.

Forthcoming briefs will include:

- Cholera: Models of Care; and
- HIV/AIDS Treatment options in KZN.

The Mobile Task Team (MTT) Project

The Southern African Mobile Task Team on HIV/AIDS in Education (MTT) was established by HEARD in association with USAID, in 2000. The initiative was launched in direct response to expressions of need from a number of Ministries of Health throughout the Southern African region for assistance in the development of implementable strategic plans to help mitigate the direct and indirect impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems and structures.

The MTT currently comprises 10 professionals working in and
(continued on page 4)

HIV/AIDS IN PRISON

The Nature and Extent of HIV Prevalence at Westville Medium B Prison



The issue of HIV/AIDS in prison in South Africa has been egregiously under-researched for a number of reasons. The primary reason for the lack of research on prison issues in general is the closed nature of the prison system in South Africa. Prior to the introduction of the Correctional Services Act of 1998, no one was allowed within 100 metres of a prison without written permission from the Commissioner. Prison research is also not popular because of the many misconceptions regarding the prisoner population. The majority of prisoners are non-violent offenders, and at least one-third are simply awaiting trial (ie. have not been convicted). The crucial fact that many fail to realise is that all but a very small fraction of prisoners will return to the community at the end of their sentence and thus issues of prison health should be considered an important part of public health in general.

HIV in prison is comprised of two issues: the substantial number of prisoners who are already HIV+ upon entering the prison, and the as yet undetermined percentage who will contract HIV during their incarceration. To date, there has never been an academic study of HIV in a South African prison. There are no reliable statistics available on the rate of HIV infection or AIDS-related deaths in prison. Because most prisoners are young, unemployed, under-educated (if not illiterate) African males, the estimated infection rate upon entry to incarceration is approximately 30%. Conditions inside the prison create an environment which is rife with high-risk behaviour for transmission of the virus, including sodomy, rape, tattooing, and sharing needles for

intravenous drug use. In other countries, high incidence upon admission compounded with high-risk behaviour contributes to infection rates inside the prison that are up to 10 times that of the general community.

For an HIV positive prisoner, poor nutrition and traumatic experiences considerably expedite the progression of their illness. In the US, the average time elapsed from HIV infection to full-blown AIDS is much quicker than that of the general population, and the period from AIDS to death is half what it is in the general community. The majority of prisoners in South Africa serve a sentence of less than 7 years, and many will serve only 3 to 5 years. Upon release, most prisoners will return to the marginalised communities from whence they came; the same communities which are already hardest hit by HIV/AIDS. If no action is taken to address the needs of HIV positive prisoners, then the tens of thousands of people released from prison each year will return to society in advanced stages of the illness, contributing to higher transmission, greater health care costs, reduced productivity, and potentially increased recidivism and crime.

In conjunction with the Medical Research Council, researchers at HEARD are conducting a pilot study of HIV/AIDS issues at Westville Medium B, a maximum security men's prison and the largest prison in KwaZulu-Natal. Jeff Gow and KC Goyer worked with the Department of Correctional Services at the national and provincial level to obtain permission for the study, which will capture the first ever HIV prevalence data from a representative sample of a prison in South Africa. Over three days,

a team of researchers collected 281 urine samples and administered a six page questionnaire which covered each prisoner's criminal history; sexual behaviour, drug use and economic situation prior to incarceration; knowledge of HIV/AIDS, as well as the standard demographic questions. The HIV testing was anonymous and unlinked, and Zulu-speaking researchers obtained written informed consent from each participant.

The results of the study will be published as several research articles, including a report detailing recommendations and policy options for the Department of Correctional Services. A grant application to gain funding for the study has been submitted to The Ford Foundation and The Open Society. Correctional Services Minister Ben Skosana, in a recent address to parliament, mentioned that the Department was co-ordinating a national study of HIV/AIDS in prisons with the Medical Research Council. Jeff Gow and KC Goyer have begun writing a proposal for a national study of prison health issues, including not just HIV, but also TB and STI's. Research on HIV in prison has been sorely lacking in South Africa, but in the coming months it is likely to gain increasing attention and HEARD will be a significant contributor to the debate.

KC Goyer is a Visiting Researcher, specialising in HIV issues in the criminal justice system.



(continued from page 2...)

around the field of HIV/AIDS and education in sub-Saharan Africa. Together they represent a rich resource of skills and knowledge. Small teams - sourced from the larger pool of professionals - assist Ministries of Education in countries of sub-Saharan Africa to move towards developing an integrated HIV/AIDS policy which would assist the sector to deal with issues such as teacher attrition, management attrition, and the inevitably increasing numbers of AIDS orphans in classrooms. To date, the MTT has conducted preliminary workshops in Namibia, Zambia, and Malawi. A second workshop for senior officials from the Education Department in Namibia took place in early March. Peter Badcock-Walters (a HEARD Research Associate) is managing this project, and Chris Desmond (Research Fellow) is a member of the MTT 'pool' of professionals. In the coming months, the initiative is likely to be rolled out in a number of other regions, starting with West Africa.

UNICEF Projects

HEARD recently completed a cost effectiveness analysis of six models of care for orphaned and vulnerable children. The project was funded by UNICEF, and was conducted by HEARD in conjunction with the Institute for Urban Primary Health Care (IUPHC). The project looked at the quality of care offered by each of the six models of care (the IUPHC phase of the project), and the costs associated with these models (HEARD phase of the project). Chris Desmond was responsible for this project.

The UNICEF cost effectiveness analysis has led to HEARD being commissioned to participate in a global study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on children. HEARD will complete part of the South African component of the study, the results of which will be presented as a comparison to those of Zambia. South African partners in this project include IDASA, Child Health Policy Institute, and the Department of Actuarial Sciences.

Planning for HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa

Notice of the 4th HEARD HIV/AIDS Durban Workshop

9 July to 20 July 2001

One of a series of International Policy Research Workshops held over the last ten years in the UK, East Asia and Africa, the 2001 workshop "Planning for HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa" builds on the experience and ideas gained over the last decade.

The workshop focuses on the need to anticipate the medium and long-term social and economic consequences of HIV/AIDS. It offers participants a unique opportunity to exchange ideas about these issues, to review their experience with strategies and tactics, and to identify interventions appropriate to their local situation.

The Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division (HEARD) of the University of Natal, Durban is organising the 2001 workshop.

Cost of the 2-week workshop is R15 750 / US\$2 300. (Includes workshop fee, full board and accommodation, airport transfers, and all materials). Travel to/from Durban, visas, per diems or any incidental expenses are not included.

Applications close June 1. Please contact HEARD for further details and application forms, or visit our website at www.und.ac.za/und/heard.

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E-News From HEARD

Each issue of *HEARD All About It* will have a section on useful internet sites and resources. To this end, we welcome suggestions and input from our readers on other relevant links for inclusion in forthcoming issues.

Health-E

www.health-e.org.za

Health-e is a news agency dedicated to producing news and analysis for the print and electronic media regarding health policy and practice in South Africa. The organisation's particular focus is to report on health issues affecting the poor and disadvantaged, and the implications of different health policies for our society as a whole.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

www.usaid.gov

USAID is the principal U.S. agency extending assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms.

An independent federal government agency, USAID works in six principal areas crucial to achieving both sustainable development and advancing US foreign policy objectives:

- Economic growth and agricultural development
- Population, health and nutrition
- Environment
- Democracy and governance
- Education and training
- Humanitarian assistance.

The agency provides assistance in four regions of the world:

- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia and the Near East
- Latin America and the Caribbean
- Europe and Eurasia.

