

NEWSLETTER

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The 7th Edition of the EHVA NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the seventh edition of the **European HIV Vaccine Alliance (EHVA)** newsletter. EHVA is an alliance of 39 partners in Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and North America. We work collaboratively to contribute to the development of safe and effective vaccines aimed at stopping HIV infections and AIDS. Through a multidisciplinary platform, EHVA facilitates the development and evaluation of novel prophylactic and therapeutic HIV vaccines, with the aim to select at least two of the most promising vaccine candidates for clinical development.

We work closely with research partners across several Sub-Saharan African countries and with the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) to ensure that the vaccine candidates are relevant for and can be evaluated in countries where vaccines are most needed. The work of EHVA is funded through a 5-year grant from the European Union's Horizon 2020 program and the Swiss Government. To learn more about EHVA visit our website

<http://www.ehva.eu>

EHVA Website

EHVA NEWS & UPDATES

EHVA Annual Meeting in Madrid

EHVA held its annual consortium meeting on October 7 and 8 in Madrid, joined by members of its Scientific Advisory Board. The meeting provided a rich overview of progress presented in 26 oral presentations and 16 posters. It was an excellent showcase for how the different work packages of EHVA are coming together in designing, selecting and advancing the most promising new vaccine candidates. Of particular note was the progress that the team made in generating novel immunogens based on HIV's envelope trimer (as reported in our previous newsletter) as well as developing new vaccine platforms (based on dendritic cell targeting, RNA and the VSV viral vector). Using EHVA's immune profiling tool, the most promising combinations of immunogens and vaccine platforms have been selected, with plans underway to prepare these for clinical testing. In parallel, plans are advancing for initiating a phase I trial evaluating an experimental therapeutic vaccine, through a collaboration with six clinical research centers across Europe and the European AIDS Treatment Group.



Stay tuned for more details on these advances in the upcoming newsletters and on the EHVA website. We wish to extend a special thank you to professor Mariano Esteban and his team of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) for hosting us in Madrid and organizing an excellent meeting.

NEWS FROM EHVA's PARTNERS

Community workshop STEPS VI -

A Community Initiative to design the Pathway to a long-term remission of HIV infection

On 6 November 2019 the EATG (European AIDS Treatment Group) organized the sixth community workshop STEPS which is focused on research for a long-term drug-free control of HIV infection. The workshop took place right before the opening of the 17th European AIDS Clinical Society conference (EACS 2019) in Basel, Switzerland. The agenda had two main points: the use of broadly neutralizing antibodies (bNAbs) and two recent cases of people who seem to control their HIV infection without antiretroviral treatment, known as the London and the Dusseldorf patients.

For more information about the workshop and a more detailed report check out the [newsletter for EATG's STEPS VI workshop](#)



Sustaining and Strengthening HIV Vaccine R&D in Europe

“Sustaining and Strengthening HIV Vaccine R&D in Europe” meeting, organized by the International AIDS Society (IAS) Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise (GHVE), and held in Ghent, Belgium. The meeting had the objective to review EU-led initiatives and to identify sustainable resources for these endeavours. Dr. Debbie King of the IAVI Human Immunology Laboratory at Imperial College London gave an overview of the research projects and consortia in Europe that are advancing HIV vaccine development, including EHVA, the European AIDS Vaccine Initiative (EAVI), the Globally Relevant AIDS Vaccine Europe-Africa Partnership (GREAT), and PrepVacc. Kevin Fisher of AVAC showed that financial support from public sources within the EU for HIV vaccine R&D is almost back to the level we had in 2000 (23m USD), following a steady decline from 2008 when those sources reached 82m USD. Unfortunately, the reduction of public funding is not compensated by increased investment by industry, which has traditionally been low. Kasia Lemanska (of Aidsfonds Netherlands) outlined the importance of engaging Member of Parliament both nationally and at the EU level in advocacy to support HIV vaccine and global health R&D. Community organizations could support this advocacy and address the challenge of fragmented and short-term funds for programmes that develop new health interventions and need sustainable resources. Roger Tatoud from the IAS emphasised the need to form coalitions and / or join existing coalitions, both on an EU and national level.

LATEST GLOBAL HIV/AIDS NEWS

Renewed global commitment required to meet the challenge of HIV vaccine development

Experts including EHVA investigators call for renewed and expanded commitment to address the complex challenges of HIV vaccine development, highlighting that global treatment efforts should be complemented with stronger investments in primary prevention, including research to accelerate the development of a preventive vaccine, which could help to change the course of the HIV epidemic and have a substantial public health impact.

For more information go to [The Lancet](#)

World AIDS Day - Communities make the difference



This year's theme for World AIDS Day was "**Communities make the difference**". The goal is to emphasize the crucial role communities have always played and continue to play in the AIDS response globally. Communities' contribution cannot be overstated. Through leadership and advocacy they ensure the response remains on the agenda and people stay at the center or if without leaving anyone behind. Communities provide peer educators and networks of people living with or affected by HIV (from gay men, sex workers to community health workers and civil society organizations). At a time when funding is being cut communities play an even more important role. Greater mobilization of communities is urgently needed to tackle the barriers and a strong advocacy by communities is required to help ensure that AIDS stays on the political agenda, that human rights are upheld and that decision-makers are held responsible.

"When people and communities have power and agency, change happens," said Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS. *"The solidarity of women, young people, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs and transgender people has transformed the AIDS epidemic—empowering them will end the epidemic."*

For more information about World AIDS day and this year's theme you can go to [UNAIDS WAD Campaigns](#).

 New UNAIDS Report – Power to the people

A new report by UNAIDS, [Power to the people](#), shows that where people and communities living with and affected by HIV are engaged in decision-making and HIV service delivery, new infections decline and more people living with HIV gain access to treatment. When people have the power to choose, to know, to thrive, to demand and to work together, lives are saved, injustices are prevented and dignity is restored. *"Communities are the very centre of the AIDS response and are critical to ending AIDS."* said Sicily Kariuki, Cabinet Secretary for Health in Kenya.

The report, launched in Kenya on 26 November by the Executive Director of UNAIDS, the Cabinet Secretary of Health of Kenya and community representatives. It shows that significant progress has been made, particularly in expanding access to treatment. As of mid-2019, an estimated 24.5 million of the 37.9 million people living with HIV were accessing treatment. As treatment roll-out continues, fewer people are dying of AIDS-related illnesses.

People and communities will end AIDS UNAIDS urges all countries to fully support and enable their community-led organizations, ensure they have a seat at all decision-making tables concerning the health and well-being of their community members and remove any barriers to their active engagement in the response to HIV. Only by fully funding and fully supporting the work of community organizations will the end of AIDS become a reality.



For more information go to [Power to the people](#)



Global HIV & AIDS statistics — 2019 Fact Sheet

- 24.5 million [21.6 million–25.5 million] people were accessing antiretroviral therapy (end of June 2019).
- 37.9 million [32.7 million–44.0 million] people globally were living with HIV (end 2018).
- 1.7 million [1.4 million–2.3 million] people became newly infected with HIV (end 2018).
- 770 000 [570 000–1.1 million] people died from AIDS-related illnesses (end 2018).
- 74.9 million [58.3 million–98.1 million] people have become infected with HIV since the start of the epidemic (end 2018).
- 32.0 million [23.6 million–43.8 million] people have died from AIDS-related illnesses since the start of the epidemic (end 2018).

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- In 2018, 79% [67–92%] of people living with HIV knew their status.
- Among people who knew their status, 78% [69–82%] were accessing treatment.
- And among people accessing treatment, 86% [72–92%] were virally suppressed.
- Of all people living with HIV, 79% [67–92%] knew their status, 62% [47–74%] were accessing treatment and 53% [43–63%] were virally suppressed in 2018.

[UNAIDS FACT SHEET](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS



The annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) will be held from **March 8 to March 11, 2020, in Boston, US**. The conference brings together top basic, translational, and clinical researchers from around the world to share the latest studies, important developments, and best research methods in the ongoing battle against HIV/AIDS and related infectious diseases. More information see [CROI](#).



In the upcoming year **San Francisco, California**, in partnership with nearby Oakland, will host the 23rd International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2020). This is 30 years after the event was held there at the height of the epidemic in the United States. AIDS 2020 will take place on **6-10 July 2020** and is expected to bring together more than 15,000 participants from around the world. For early registration and more information go to [AIDS2020](#)



HIV2020: Community Reclaiming the Global Response is scheduled to take place in **Mexico City, July 5-7, 2020**, and will run concurrently with the first half of the international AIDS conference. An alliance of global key population-led networks, networks of people living with HIV, treatment activists, and their supporters, has formed to organize an alternative international community-led event. The event aims to provide a safe alternative for individuals who cannot or will not enter the U.S. in 2020 or who cannot afford to attend AIDS2020. It will also offer new opportunities to reaffirm the leading role communities play in the global HIV response. For more information, see [HIV2020](#)

If you have any feedback, questions or suggestions, please contact us! We look forward to hearing from you!

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