

IHPREG Emerging Team Grant



Newsletter
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IHPREG

INTERDISCIPLINARY
HIV PREGNANCY
RESEARCH GROUP



Contents

- Page 1** The First Annual IHPREG Conference
- Page 2** The NEW CHPPG Guidelines
- Page 3** Study Updates
- Page 4** Study Updates Cont.
Summer Student Report: Mary - Elizabeth
- Page 5** Summer Student Report: Ashley
- Page 6** PAB Registration/Renewal
A Note from Logan Kennedy

The First Annual IHPREG Conference: Together we are Stronger

On June 14th and 15th, over 65 people gathered at the Ramada Plaza hotel in Toronto for the First Annual IHPREG Conference: Together we are Stronger. This year's conference theme was chosen to represent that IHPREG first emerged as a research team to enable provincial collaboration. Delegates attended from all corners of Ontario, coming from as far South as Windsor, and as far East as Ottawa. The two-day conference was full of informative abstracts, thought provoking panel sessions and exciting plenaries. Abstract sessions included clinical sciences, basic science, social science, community-based programs, and student work. The lecture given by Dr. Margaret Johnson of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, and the following panel discussion on infant feeding issues for HIV positive mothers in Canada inspired an especially important debate. Less a formal conference, and more a community gathering, the connections made at the IHPREG conference will not only help refine pre-existing studies, but will also inform the creation of new research endeavors.



A photo of Dr. Mona Loutfy (left) and Logan Kennedy (right) during the conference.

SOGC CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

No. 278, June 2012

Canadian HIV Pregnancy Planning Guidelines

These guidelines have been written and reviewed by the Canadian HIV Pregnancy Planning Guideline Development Team in partnership with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Canadian Fertility and Andrology Society and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Trials Network. They were reviewed by the Infectious Diseases Committee and the Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility Committee of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada and by the Canadian HIV Pregnancy Planning Guideline Development Team Core Working Group, and endorsed by the Executive and Council of the SOGC.

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*See Appendix for a list of working group members.

Disclosure statements have been received from all authors.

Abstract

Objective: Four main clinical issues need to be considered for

Outcomes: Intended outcomes are (1) reduction of risk of vertical transmission and horizontal transmission of HIV, (2) improvement of maternal and infant health outcomes in the presence of HIV, (3) reduction of the stigma associated with pregnancy and HIV, and (4) increased access to pregnancy planning and fertility services.

Evidence: PubMed and Medline were searched for articles published in English or French to December 30, 2010, using the following terms: "HIV" and "pregnancy" or "pregnancy planning" or "fertility" or "reproduction" or "infertility" or "parenthood" or "insemination" or "artificial insemination" or "sperm washing" or "IVF" or "ICSI" or "IUI." Other search terms included "HIV" and "horizontal transmission" or "sexual transmission" or "serodiscordant." The following conference databases were also searched: Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, International AIDS Conference, International AIDS Society, Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy, the Canadian Association of HIV/AIDS Research, and the Ontario HIV Treatment Network Research Conference. Finally, a hand search of key journals and conferences was performed, and references of retrieved articles were reviewed for additional citations. Subsequently, abstracts were categorized according to their primary topic (based on an outline of the guidelines) into table format with the following headings: author, title, study purpose, participants, results and general comments. Finally, experts in the field were consulted for their opinions as to whether any articles were missed.

Values: The quality of evidence was rated using the criteria described in the Report of the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care. Recommendations for practice were ranked according to the method described in that report (Table) and through use of the

Announcing***The NEW Canadian
HIV Pregnancy
Planning Guidelines
(CHPPG)***

The Canadian HIV Pregnancy Planning Guidelines (CHPPG) are now in print. These evidence-based clinical practice guidelines were developed by multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, CHPPG Development Team of over fifty Canadian experts. Consistent with a community-based approach, guideline development included members of the community in all aspects of the project and stakeholders from diverse demographic groups and from across Canada for national representation. The goal of the CHPPG is to provide clinical information and recommendations for health care providers to assist HIV-positive individuals and couples with their fertility and pregnancy planning decisions. The intended outcomes of implementing these guidelines are a reduction of risk of vertical transmission and horizontal transmission of HIV, improvement of maternal and infant health outcomes in the presence of HIV, reduction of the stigma associated with pregnancy and HIV, increased access to pregnancy planning and fertility services.

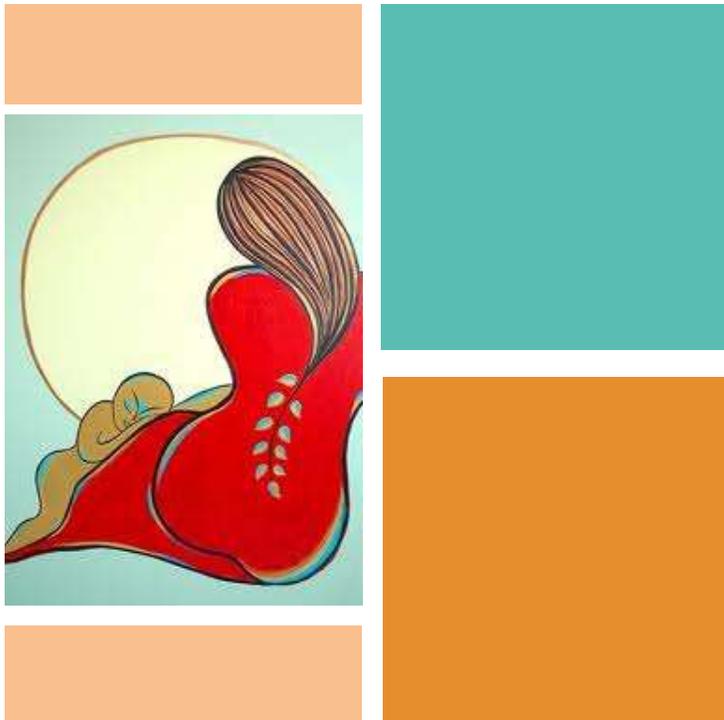
The guidelines will be formally launched at AIDS 2012, and copies are available for download on the IHPREG website, or by clicking the hyperlink below.

Excerpt of Key CHPPG Recommendations

View/download the
new CHPPG
Guidelines

[HERE](#)

- Reproductive health counseling, including contraception and pregnancy planning, should be offered to *all* reproductive-aged HIV-positive persons soon after HIV diagnosis and on an ongoing basis.
- Men and women should be counseled on all relevant aspects of pregnancy planning as outlined in current Canadian practice guidelines irrespective of their known HIV status



UPDATE Mothering on the Margins Study (MOM)

The postpartum/motherhood study has a new name: **The Mothering on the Margins Study (MOM)**.

Mark and Logan made several trips within Ontario to meet with new collaborators on this study that will match participants with the women enrolled in the HIV Mothering Study. It was a great experience to connect with Obstetricians in London, Hamilton, and Oshawa that are excited to be working with IHPREG to expand our knowledge of the first year of motherhood for women across Ontario.

So what is next for MOM? The central site at Women's College Hospital in Toronto is busy supporting enrolling sites with ethics submissions and contracts. We expect to be up and running in London, Hamilton, and Toronto by early Fall.

We are also thrilled to be working with three exceptional Research Assistants, Lori Chambers (Toronto Area), Dawn Elston (South Western Ontario), and Stephanie Smith (Ontario East).

UPDATE Ontario HIV Preconception Cohort Pilot Study (OPC)

WE ARE ENROLLING!

The OPC team has started enrolling its first participants for the Feasibility of the Ontario HIV Preconception Cohort Study. As of August, 22 participants have been enrolled at five sites. Of the enrolled participants, 12 have completed the study.



Being the first of the Emerging Team Grant studies to get up and running, AAPH continues to enroll from the four original sites. Sunnybrook also came on as the fifth official site in the Spring. Enrolment is now at 41 participants!

Over the summer, Lena and the AAPH team have been busy working towards enrollment of HIV-negative matched women from Mount Sinai Hospital and St. Michael's Hospital. A special thank you to Sheryl Hewko at Mount Sinai who is helping us refine the matching criteria to enhance feasibility of recruitment.

We are also excited that Dr. Rajiv Shah at St. Michael's has agreed to come on board as a Co-Investigator to enroll HIV-negative women. Dr. Shah has long standard research connections with IHPREG investigators and we are pleased to have him join our work.

Thank you to all of the Research Coordinators at the AAPH sites who have facilitated the great success of this study over the last several months!

UPDATE Angiogenesis and Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes in Women with HIV (AAPH)

Reporting on the IHPREG Summer Student Research Award Experience

Who was the student? *Mary-Elizabeth Vaccaro*

Who were the supervisors? *Drs. Saara Greene and Fiona Smail
and Allyson Ion at McMaster*

What did Mary-Elizabeth say about her summer with IHPREG?

As a Social Work student from McMaster University, having the opportunity to be involved in the HIV Mothering Study through IHPREG has been an invaluable experience. Throughout the summer I was able to learn in depth about the process of research, while considering how the findings from this study will help to generate and impact policies and programs for HIV positive mothers. What I have appreciated most about my experience as an IHPREG summer student is the supportive environment and opportunity to work on tasks that focus on areas I am interested in. Throughout the summer, I was able to conduct my own research on HIV positive mother's involvement and experiences with Children's Aid Societies. This opportunity has sparked my interest in research, which is an area of social work I did not know I was passionate about before my experience with IHPREG.



Have You Been Wondering What Happened to the IHPREG Community Advisory Board?

After a year long hiatus while IHPREG got up and running, we are excited to re-launch the IHPREG CAB. The CAB is an integral tool to the meaningful success of IHPREG. We are in the process of finalizing new Co-Chairs and redeveloping the CAB membership list. We are hoping to hold the first meeting in early October, approximately 6 weeks before the Winter PAB meeting. All IHPREG supported projects will be invited to present to the new CAB at this upcoming meeting so please stay tuned for dates and details.

Reporting on the IHPREG Summer Student Research Award Experience



Who was the student? *Ashley DiMeo*

Who was the supervisor? *Dr. Lena Serghides at University Health Network*

What did Ashley say about her summer with IHPREG?

Accepting this award was, for me, the most exciting moment this summer. I was both excited for the opportunity to expand my knowledge as well as eager to begin my position in the lab. I walked into the lab on the first day with some background in HIV courtesy of the introductory virology course I had taken the previous school year. However, introductory to virology did not cover HIV and pregnancy, a topic which was to be my focus during the summer. The project that I focused on was investigating the role of antiretrovirals in adverse pregnancy. Therefore, like most summer students I spent the first week reading over the grant proposal, looking at supplementary papers, and shadowing the post-doctoral fellow in the lab to solidify my understanding about the techniques that I was going to become familiar with over the next three months. It is sufficient to say that my experience this summer with IHPREG has taught me a lot, not only in the lab, but also from attending the 1st annual IHPREG conference. From my time spent in the lab I learned how to conduct an ELISA, an absorbance assay which allows the investigator to detect the amount of a particular protein in a plasma sample via an enzyme linked antibody. I was also fortunate to participate in the ARC animal care training session at UHN. As a student eager to pursue a career in science, my experience working with mice has been an important aspect of my professional development. Furthermore, attending the 1st annual IHPREG conference in June stressed the importance of networking and has shown me first-hand the power of collaboration. I must say that it is quite remarkable to sit in a room with people from all walks of life and discuss a topic that is equally important to each individual. I honestly think that after two days everyone, including myself, learned something new. For instance I learned that Nevirapin, a once commonly prescribed anti-retroviral, is no longer being used to minimize mother to child transmission, instead drugs such as, Lopinavir and Raltegravir, are being prescribed. Finally, I would like to thank Women's College Hospital, Dr. Lena Serghides, Dr. Eszter Papp, the Kain lab, and all the individuals involved in IHPREG for such a great opportunity and for sharing their knowledge regarding both the joys and obstacles surrounding HIV and pregnancy.

Did you know?

IHPREG launched its website in February to warm responses. If you haven't visited, check it out at www.ihpreg.ca. For those who asked, we are sorting out the Google issue! Stay tuned.

The Next IHPREG PAB Meeting will be in LATE NOVEMBER 2012.

Please be sure to submit your availability through the doodle poll that will be sent on September 10th, 2012.

Have you reregistered as an IHPREG member for 2012-2013?

Hopefully you have received a reminder email about Registration to become/remain a member of the IHPREG Provincial Advisory Board for the coming. This Board includes all Applicants, Co-Applicants, Collaborators, and Knowledge Users on the Emerging Team Grant, as well as various stakeholders from across the province.

If you are interested in joining IHPREG, or renewing your membership but have not been contacted by Logan Kennedy, please email her.

Logan.Kennedy@wchospital.ca

A Note from Logan Kennedy

I can hardly believe it has been eight months since the first newsletter and nearly a year since I joined IHPREG! It has been busy, productive, and incredibly rewarding.

I want to thank all of the delegates that were able to attend the First Annual IHPREG Conference in June. It was especially exciting to welcome guests, new IHPREG members, and bursary winners who took the opportunity to learn more about what is happening in Ontario in regards to HIV and Reproductive Health. I can't wait to do it again next year!

I also want to extend a welcome to those receiving this newsletter for the first time. Thanks to our website, we now have a list of individuals that have requested our newsletter! Please feel free to distribute this widely.

So what can you expect from IHPREG for the rest of 2012. Here is a short list of some of our goals and objectives:

- **Launch the IHPREG Graduate Student Award Application**
- **Submit a CIHR Knowledge Synthesis Grant on Infant Feeding**
- **Re-launch the IHPREG CAB**

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible work of Micaela Collins, a Women's College Hospital Summer student, who worked with me from May to August. Micaela was instrumental in the success of the conference, in getting this newsletter started, and in generally continuing the accomplishments of IHPREG. Micaela is starting her Master's in Public Health at U of T in September and we wish her great success! Thanks Micaela.