

# HIV/AIDS Research and Programs

Making the world a healthier place to live



RTI International conducts HIV research and provides comprehensive technical assistance for HIV programs, policy, advocacy, and systems strengthening. We work with and on behalf of U.S. federal agencies, international health ministries, local governments, donors, foundations, and other clients seeking to prevent the spread of HIV in the United States and around the world.

RTI brings together multidisciplinary teams to conduct innovative research and deliver effective and cost-efficient technical assistance—with a focus on HIV prevention and strengthening systems for service delivery.

Worldwide, we collaborate with local communities, national and local governments, private foundations, research and academic institutions, community- and faith-based organizations, and other stakeholders. Our HIV/AIDS work builds upon behavioral research and interventions, including community-based and clinical trials, and decades of applied program experience in developing countries.

## Populations

### Work with Vulnerable Women

Responding to the need for increased options, access, and availability of health care for women, RTI has several woman-focused and gender-specific initiatives. The Women's Global Health Imperative (WGHI) at RTI provides scientific leadership to help women and girls around the world protect and improve their reproductive health. The Women's Health CoOp offers comprehensive woman-focused, culturally relevant HIV prevention interventions to vulnerable women. It has been adapted to many international locations, and it has been packaged for dissemination across sub-Saharan Africa. Together, these projects offer groundbreaking research on women's health issues in the United States, India, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa. The research focus areas include sexual health of adolescents and young women; reproductive health risk reduction through increased economic opportunity, availability of female-initiated contraceptives, and couples-based HIV/AIDS prevention

### Populations

RTI specializes in studying and addressing the needs of people considered most at risk:

- Vulnerable women in the United States and worldwide
- Injecting drug users
- Non-injecting drug users
- Men who have sex with men
- Sex workers
- Pregnant women
- Mobile and military populations
- Adolescents
- Transgender people
- Couples at risk

strategies; addressing gender inequalities; substance abuse; gender-based violence; migration and reproductive health; and integration of biomedical, behavioral, and socioeconomic prevention strategies.

### Prevention among Most-at-Risk Populations (MARPs)

Our HIV experts are internationally recognized for their work with MARPs and their partners. We develop, test, and implement prevention interventions that are appropriate to the needs of hard-to-reach populations and their communities. Through innovative research and partnerships with at-risk people and communities, we are able to implement innovative and appropriate behavioral and treatment-based interventions that take into account the unique human rights and legal issues faced by MARPs, as well as the stigma and discrimination that restrict access to prevention, care, and treatment. By adapting and scaling up best-evidence interventions, our partnerships translate research into practice in order to help protect vulnerable populations against intersecting risks.

Many of our prevention activities for MARPs use a multi-level approach that engages risk group members and policy makers. For example, our research has shown that variation in the type of syringe used by injecting drug users may influence transmission of HIV. Building on these findings, our current efforts involve working with policy makers to increase the availability of lower risk syringes and with drug users to increase their use of lower risk syringes.

## Capabilities

### Clinical and International Epidemiology

RTI conducts high-impact epidemiological research to identify the distribution and determinants of HIV infection. We have extensive experience—both domestically and



internationally—in survey and registry work as well as complex multisite epidemiological studies.

### Data Coordinating Centers

We specialize in data coordination for multisite research studies in which multiple research centers implement common and unique study protocols. We support a wide spectrum of clinical and behavioral research, including epidemiologic studies and prevention interventions. We supply flexible methods for acquiring and managing all types of data, including survey, clinical, medical measurement, and laboratory results. Our data coordination services are custom-designed to meet the specific research requirements of each project while using proven methods and technologies.

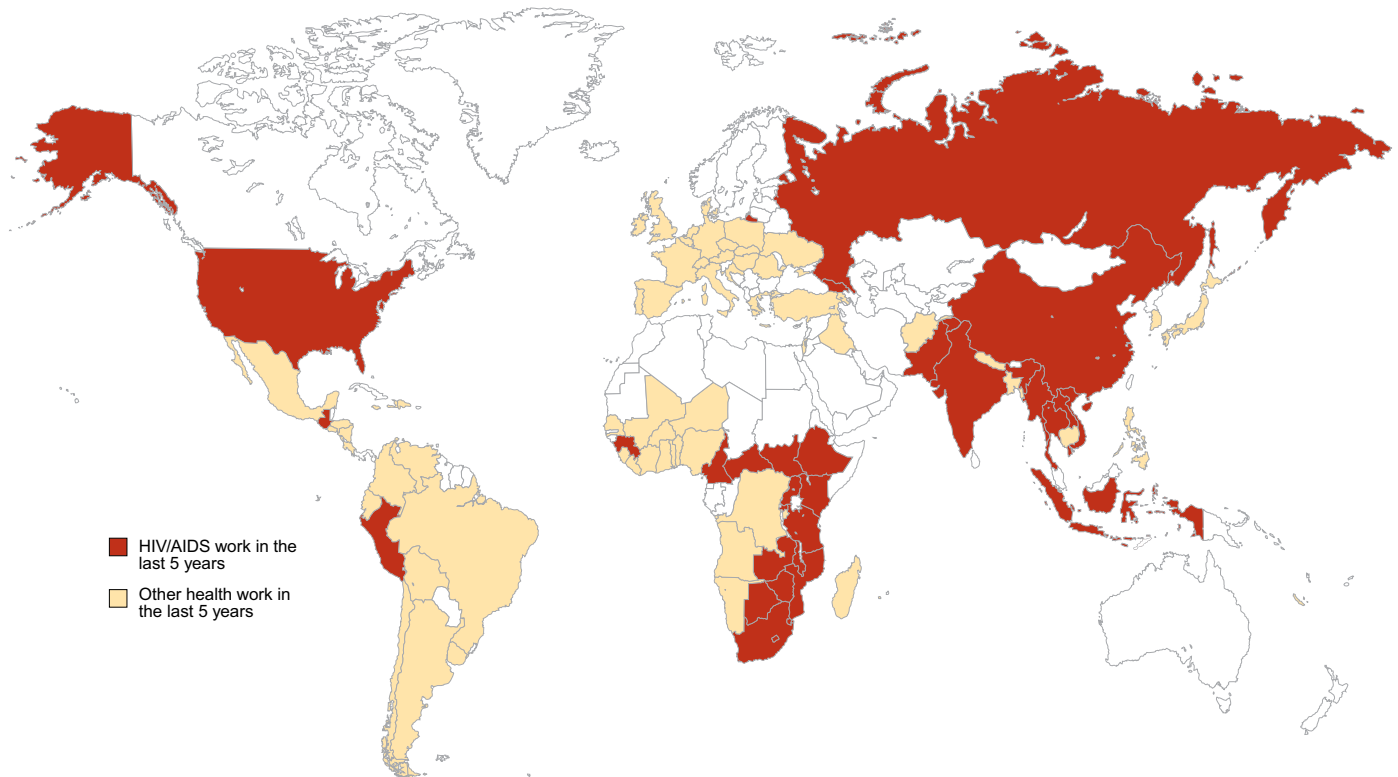
### Health Communication and Marketing

RTI's experts in health communication and social marketing routinely conduct formative research to identify appropriate target audiences and segmentation strategies to inform HIV prevention efforts. We work with creative agencies to execute theory-driven HIV testing and prevention campaigns targeting health care providers and at-risk consumers. We design evaluations for these campaigns that seek to understand how well a message reached its target audience and its effects on their knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and health outcomes. Our health communication researchers are exploring the use and efficacy of new technologies, like mobile

### Hallmarks of Our Work in HIV/AIDS

- Multidisciplinary approaches
- Evidence-based prevention intervention programs
- Capacity building for sustainability
- Development of intervention packages for wide-scale use
- Community involvement, locally relevant solutions
- Data-driven decision making
- Focus on gender and culture
- Effective research and programming for MARPs
- Scientific rigor and quality
- Collaborative research to strengthen the evidence base of reproductive health programs and policies
- Development, adaptation, and evaluation of public health interventions
- Training and mentoring of global health researchers worldwide
- Clinical trial design, implementation, and medical monitoring

texting, in disseminating HIV prevention messages. We have also worked with international agencies to plan, organize, and manage specialty events on HIV/AIDS, such as the Second Global HIV/AIDS Surveillance Meeting.



### Health Systems Strengthening and Policy Reform

RTI works in developing countries to strengthen all aspects of health systems to respond effectively to HIV—from advocating and supporting national goals for health sector reform to building the capacity of local government agencies to deliver services. Our expertise includes

- Economics and financing
- Existing and emerging information technology
- Planning, budgeting, and management of health sector reform to influence health policy
- Governance, accountability, and transparency
- Administration of grants to local partners to enhance and scale up the delivery of HIV services

### Policy and Program Evaluation

At RTI, we apply research and program experience to implement effective HIV programs that are appropriate for a given country and its people. By emphasizing community and stakeholder involvement and public-private partnerships, we help to ensure that programs can be scaled up for sustainability.

Strong monitoring and evaluation systems are key to all RTI programs, enabling us to provide data-based lessons learned

### Responsible and Effective Project Management

RTI trains all Chiefs of Party (COPs) and Deputy COPs of our international programs in all aspects of project operations and management. Training sessions cover project start-up and close-down, legal and ethical behavior, field finance information, contracts, media relations, information technology infrastructure, security, procurement and property issues, subcontracting, and human resources.

### Selected Clients

- U.S. Agency for International Development
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institutes of Health
- U.S. Naval Health Research Center
- CONRAD

at every stage, from design through implementation and close-out. We also help implement and provide training in surveillance systems that support epidemiologic investigation of HIV, opportunistic infections, and sexually transmitted infections.

### Modeling and Simulation

Our team of professional modelers uses mathematical modeling and simulation techniques to evaluate biological processes, social interaction in disease behavior, and associated health outcomes. Models developed and applied at RTI provide insights into resource allocation for AIDS treatment, the spread of HIV in networks of injecting drug users, and cost-benefit and cost-consequence analyses of various HIV therapies.

### More Information

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RTI 7089 R1 0911



RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. Our staff of more than 2,800 provides research and technical expertise to governments and businesses in more than 40 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy and the environment, and laboratory and chemistry services. For more information, visit [www.rti.org](http://www.rti.org).

RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.