REPORT ON THE END OF PROJECT
DISSEMINATION MEETING FOR THE
MSMS IN COLLABORATION WITH TIER
HELD ON 13TH DECEMBER 2011

REPORT BY:
NEW HIV VACCINE AND MICROBICIDE ADVOCACY SOCIETY (NHVMAS)
Over the last 8 year NHVMAS has focused on it goal of seeing to the creation of a conductive environment that supports HIV related research in Nigeria. In this light NHVMAS has among other activities concentrated its efforts on building the capacity of communities to engage in new biomedical HIV prevention research. NHVMAS in collaboration with its various partners in the MARPs community decided to do a dissemination meeting on its activities and on how to stir and strengthen partnership and the research literacy project forward for the 2012 and beyond. For this meeting it worked together with The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIER).

The dissemination meeting took place at the TIER office at Ikeja, it started at 1:40am with an introduction of the guest by TIER representative. In attendance were 55 persons including Key Opinion Officers, Outreach Coordinators, Peer Educators and some end users.

The meeting focused on NHVMAS efforts on building the capacity of communities to engage in new biomedical HIV prevention research and its impact. This includes an increase in awareness on the need for engaging communities in the design and implementation of researches.

Participants were informed about the efforts of NHVMAS and its partners to build the capacity of the community to be able to engage with researchers on biomedical HIV prevention research. this include sharing information on how to address research literacy within the community and the effort of NHVMAS at developing a research literacy tool that can be used by peer educators to train on engagement with research. There were also discussions on existing HIV prevention such as abstinence, being faithful to one partner and the use of both female and male condom as its strategies. There is also the elimination of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) which is important if Nigeria is to align with international practice, sex education, PEP and the appropriate treatment of vagina, penile and anal STIs help to reduce the individual’s risk of HIV infection. The need to expand the current existing tools for HIV prevention tools was discussed and information about developing new tools was discussed. Discussion included the need for rectal microbicide.

Discussion: What does it have to do with you?
The discussions were facilitated with Olumide and the participants were asked to discuss on three points

a. How do we effectively engagement community in research:
Participants explained that there was the need to have:
• more information on clinical research
• Training on research literacy as most did not understand the terminologies.
• More information and knowledge on the benefit of involvement in research.
• They also explained that the language of the training should be simplified so that most of them will be able to understand.
• The use of social networking –facebook, twitters and bulk sms to send these information most of them have the facilities on their phones.

b. How do we address your capacity to engage with researchers as equal partners?
Most of the participants wanted information on NPTS, other points are highlighted below:
• More information/ education on rectal microbicides
• Capacity building on NPTs
• Simplicity of scientific language and statistics
• Training on the research process.
• Capacity building of the key opinion leaders in the community on NPTs

c. How can NHVMAS work with researchers so that they can engage MSMs
Participants were of the opinion that:
• researchers should seek the inputs of their community in their research design
• Researchers should give full discourse of the risks involved in any research.
• Researcher should use audio visuals for presentation to enable better understanding.
• Researchers should liaise with their gatekeepers, who are better informed and will pass the message across.

d. Who should NHVMAS work with in 2012?
Participants also opined that the under listed should be the area of focus for NHVMAS in 2012
• Key opinion leaders in the MSM community on: research literacy, research process and NPTs
• CSOs on: sexuality diversity, rights of MSMs and benefits of research and NPTs
• The media on: sexuality diversity, rights of MSMs and benefits of research.
• Researchers: sexual diversity, confidentiality, rights of MSMs
• The general population through the social media and leaflets on: research literacy, research process, NPTs, sexuality diversity, rights of MSMs and benefits of research.
• Religious organisations: NPTs, sexuality diversity, rights of MSMs and benefits of research.
• Policy makers: NPTs, sexuality diversity, rights of MSMs and benefits of research
• Government agencies: NPTs, sexuality diversity, rights of MSMs and benefits of research

Lesson learnt:
• Contrary to information, it appears that most of the MSMs had no knowledge of rectal microbicides. In fact, comments from most of them is that they have never heard of microbicides or vaccines in HIV prevention.
• MSMs appear very interested in new HIV prevention technology research and development
• Most will be willing to participate in research if they have more knowledge about the risk and benefits involved.

Next step:
• NHVMAS needs to identify more organizations working with LGBT.
• Develop proposal on research literacy that will build the capacity of the community to understand clinical trial processes as well as be able to understand and interpret trial results.
• Need to work closer with the community to address the issue of rectal microbicide. This may include enlisting members on the NHVMAS listserv which will serve as an educational medium.