

## South Africa at the CROI 2012

### Annette Gerritsen - epidemiology consultant at Epi Result

The current issue of the SACEMA Quarterly focuses on research findings on South Africa that have been presented at the 19th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) that was held from 5-8 March 2012 in Seattle. The role of treatment as prevention and combining different strategies to reduce the HIV incidence continue to be hot topics. The study by Ramzi Alsallaq et al. focuses on mathematical modelling on the impact of combined interventions on the short- and long-term incidence of HIV in KwaZulu-Natal. As this is just one of the large number of mathematical models predicting the incidence of HIV in South Africa, the HIV Modelling Consortium brought together mathematical modellers to do a model comparison exercise to see what the potential role is of HIV treatment as prevention in South Africa. The results are presented by Jeff Eaton et al. Finally, the article of Stephane Verguet is focussing on how best to assess the (cost-)effectiveness of different HIV treatment programs and models so that the existing limited resources can be allocated optimally.

However, there were many other interesting studies on South Africa, which will hopefully soon be published in the scientific literature and maybe at a later stage in the Quarterly. For example, Frank Tanser reported on a study conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, demonstrating that HIV incidence can be reduced even with ART only initiated at a CD4 count lower than 200 (350 for pregnant women), and therefore suggests that the recently increased treatment eligibility to a CD4 count lower than 350 could lead to even greater reductions in HIV incidence (1). Furthermore, Betran Auvert reported on a study conducted in Orange farm showing that

the roll-out of male circumcision can lead to a significant reduction in the prevalence of herpes simplex virus 2 (HSV-2) among men (2). Finally, Gavin Churchyard reported on the Thibela TB study, which contrary to expectations showed that giving isoniazid preventive therapy (IPT) to all workers of a gold mine had no effect on TB incidence, TB prevalence or all-cause mortality, when compared to a group of gold miners receiving standard TB programme management (3).

If you are interested in other issues that have been discussed at the conference, the abstracts as well as webcasts and podcasts are available at the website (<http://retroconference.org/>).

**Annette Gerritsen**, epidemiology consultant at Epi Result. Areas of interest: research methodology, infectious diseases epidemiology, migration and health. *Annette.gerritsen @epireult.com*

#### References:

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2. Auvert B, Blake A, Maseko V, Lissouba P, Lewis D, Taljaard D. ANRS-12126 - Impact of male circumcision roll-out on HSV-2 prevalence among men: Orange farm, South Africa. CROI 2012. <http://www.retroconference.org/2012b/Abstracts/43579.htm> Accessed 1 June 2012.
3. Churchyard G, Fielding K, Lewis J, et al. Community-wide isoniazid preventive therapy does not improve TB control among gold miners: the Thibela TB study, South Africa. CROI 2012. <http://www.retroconference.org/2012b/Abstracts/45513.htm> Accessed 1 June 2012.