Reducing HIV Risk Behaviour after Intervention with Young Leaders of Key Populations in Brazil

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Introduction Peer dialogues influence the adoption of behavioural changes to reduce the risk of HIV infection (human immunodeficiency virus). By intervening experimentally in the community to change risk behaviour patterns, it may be possible to promote widespread reductions in HIV risk practices within a population.

Methods The intervention identified and trained young age range 18–26 people who are reliably identified as leaders among one of these key populations - gay men and MSM, transgender people (transvestites and transsexual women), drug users and harm reducers and sex workers - in all five regions of Brazil to act as multipliers of behavioural changes for their peers, in relation to HIV. We also include young people living with HIV, considering that it is important that these young people share the experience of living with HIV with other young people in greater vulnerability and risk.

Results 140 young people from the key populations were trained in the 5 Brazilian regions. The proportions of the key populations trained in this intervention were 41.9 per cent homosexuals and MSM, 14.5 per cent harm reduction or drug users, 8 per cent transgender people, 6 per cent sex workers and 15 per cent young people living with HIV. Approximately 70% of young trained in this intervention have already developed some activity to multiply the information about prevention and behavioural practices to reduce HIV infection in their respective territories and communities, promoting knowledge about combination prevention and changes related to sexual practices and behaviours.

Conclusion Interventions that empower young to endorse change can produce or accelerate changes in the behaviour and sexual practices of the young population to reduce the risk of HIV infection. These interventions have developed a network of multipliers in a successive chain of HIV information and combination prevention to reduce HIV infection and risk behaviours through peer-to-peer communication at the community level among young key populations in Brazil.