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*Abstract*

# Challenges of Recruiting and Retaining African Women in HIV Vaccine Clinical Trials †

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**Abstract:** One of the most urgent global public health needs is the development of a safe, effective, and accessible HIV vaccine. The ethical imperative demands that the situation of those people and population most vulnerable to exposure of HIV infection be addressed, especially women who are disproportionately affected by the infection. Participation of women in testing appropriate products is imperative and therefore the need for the recruitment and retention of African women in HIV vaccine clinical trials is of significance. The recruitment and retention of women in sub Saharan Africa who are vulnerable due to some factors beyond their control such as Biological, socio-cultural and socio-economic factors are further entangled in a number of challenges. These challenges include but not limited to Community participation consideration which vary within and between cultures. Other challenges are consent issues which should be freely given but could be influenced by coercion from husbands. Confidentiality that should be absolute for men and women is a more critical issue for women in Africa since they may need the permission of their husbands to participate in the study. Enrolment and retention of women in HIV vaccine clinical trials is an important challenge to the successful development of an effective vaccine. Therefore there is need for researchers to identify the various challenges and retention strategies through community involvement and representation before inception of clinical trials and ensure that the needs of this population are respected.

**Keywords:** women; HIV; clinical trial

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