



Photo: Jon Hrusa



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# Promoting Male Involvement in PMTCT

Experiences from a rapid syphilis test pilot  
program in Zambia

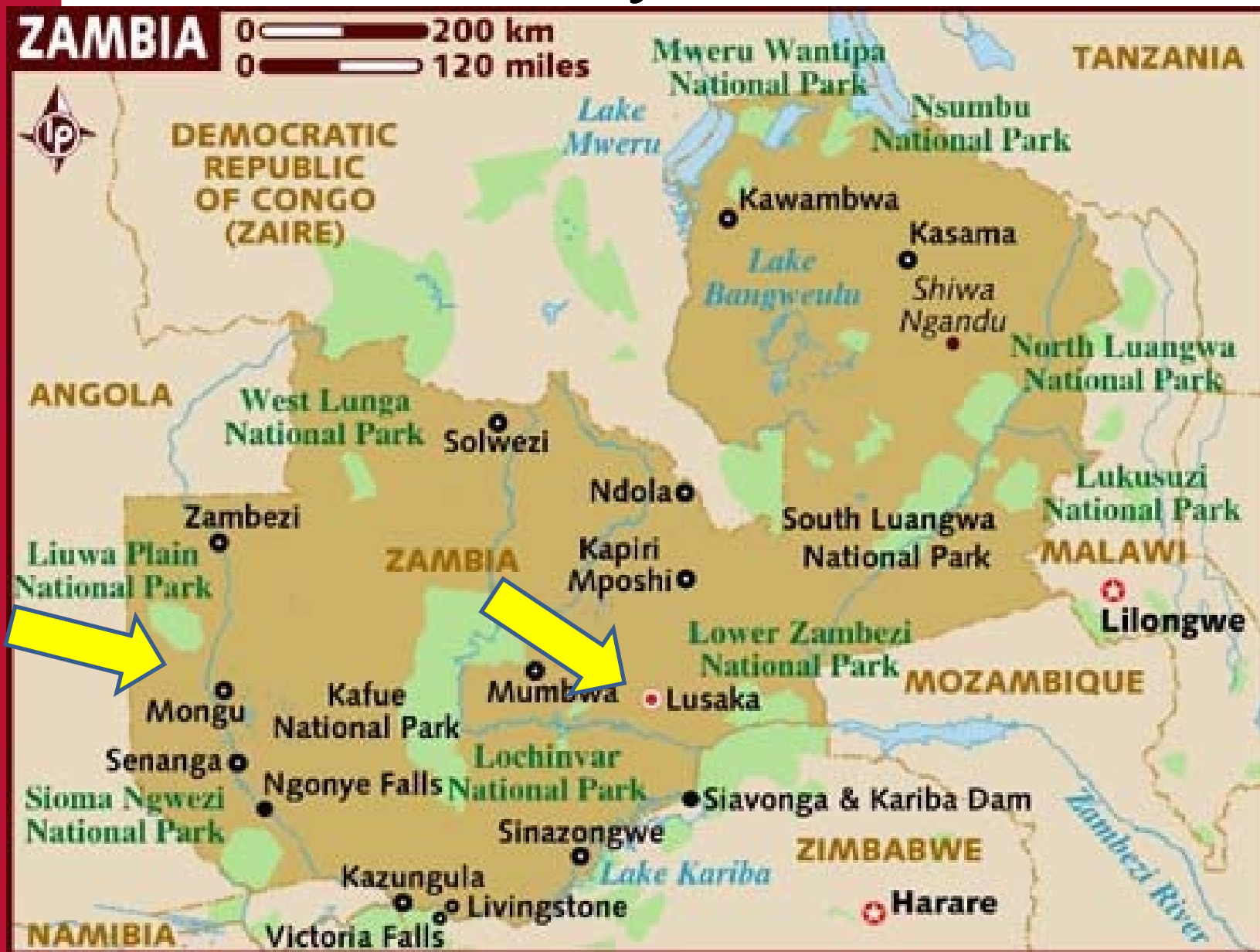
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# Background

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- EGPAF/CIDRZ Project Heart Program funded by PEPFAR/CDC in PY7
  - 294 PMTCT sites
  - HIV Rapid testing is standard, RPR testing not consistently available
  - Syphilis prevalence Lusaka (2.5%), Mongu (7%)
  - Male involvement increasingly being encouraged
  - Pilot study on adding rapid syphilis concurrent with HIV testing for both partners in ANC

# Study Sites



# Study Objectives

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## Primary Objective

- To determine *if* introducing a Same-Day Testing & Treatment (STAT) strategy for syphilis into existing PMTCT services is feasible, acceptable and cost-effective.

## Secondary Objectives

- To determine the rate of dual (HIV and Syphilis) infections.
- To assess the effect of introducing a “package”, that includes both HIV and syphilis testing, on the uptake of HIV and syphilis testing by male partners.

# Anticipated Impacts

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- Increased access to rapid syphilis testing
- Increased identification and treatment for syphilis positive women in both urban and rural areas
- Increased partner testing and treatment
- Improved clinic efficiency and effectiveness

# Partner Invitation Slip

## LDHMT Partner Notification Antenatal Invitation Slip Receipt

*Invitation Number*

*District* *HC* *Client ID #*

Tested for HIV: R  NR  IND

Tested for Syphilis: R  NR

*Date Invitation Slip Issued*

*Day* *Month* *Year*



## LDHMT Partner Notification Antenatal Invitation

*Invitation Number*

*District* *HC* *Client ID#*



Lusaka District  
Health Management Team

**For LDHMT only**

Site:

Date:

# Partner Invitation Slip

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## DEVELOPMENT

- Developed locally by study team and district health staff
- Style based on contact slips used in STI programs
- Developed to test study hypothesis that men are more likely to come to clinic for a syphilis test than an HIV test

# Partner Invitation Slip

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## TRAINING

- Study nurses work in PMTCT and were already trained in HIV counseling and testing
- Nurses received additional training in
  - syphilis point of care (rapid) testing,
  - the links between HIV and syphilis,
  - the risks of congenital syphilis,
  - treatment for syphilis,
  - the rationale for the partner invite slip and,
  - how to use the partner invite slip.



# Partner Invitation Slip

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## Implementation

- Nurses provide the partner invitation slip following post test counseling for both HIV and syphilis
- Women are instructed to provide the invite slip to their partner(s) and to encourage their partner(s) to go to one of the clinics listed on the back of the notification slip for testing/treatment
  - Nurses discuss the possible consequences of giving the slip with women
  - If a woman expresses concern about being victimized- she is encouraged to come back to the clinic with the partner for partner pretest as well as disclosure counseling

# Lessons to date

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## Successes

- Same day testing and treatment reduces missed opportunities
- National PMCT and VCT campaigns encourage male involvement facilitating uptake of the invite slip
- ANC attendees are actively using the partner invitation slip to encourage male involvement
  - Only one report of refusal
- Men respond to invites and return for testing and treatment in MCH
- Men's role in protecting the health of the unborn child is well understood

## Challenges

- Discordant results leads to counseling and treatment challenges for health workers and couples
- Time, space and HR constraints in busy MCH departments
- Responding to men's health care needs
  - Referral options

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