

2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT



PRAYAS HEALTH GROUP

PRAYAS AMRITA CLINIC, ATHAWALE CORNER, KARVE
ROAD, DECCAN GYMKHANA, PUNE - 411004



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Prayas Health Group



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Foreward

Dear friends,

We are pleased to present the annual report of Prayas Health Group (PHG) for the year 2021-22.

This report gives the details of our activities from April 2021 to March 2022.

We are grateful to our donors, funding agencies, friends and, well-wishers for their continued support.

We are indebted to our patients, participants in our programs, and research projects to motivate us to continue our work.

Dr. Sanjeevani Kulkarni
Coordinator, Prayas
Health Group

Dr. Vinay Kulkarni
Coordinator, Prayas
Health Group

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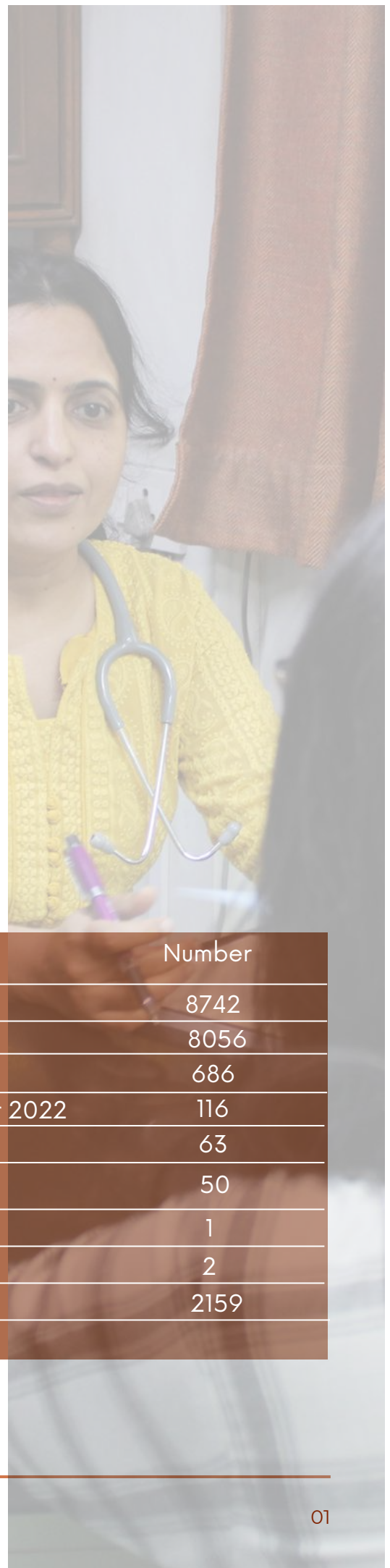
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SERVICES PROVIDED

Prayas Amrita Clinic

Amrita Clinic (AC) was started by DR. Vinay Kulkarni in 1989 to provide HIV related healthcare. It was later merged with Prayas Health Group in 2006. It provides healthcare and related services to people living with HIV (PLHIV).

For the entire month of December 2021, we provided free counseling on HIV and sexual health concerns as well as free testing for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis.

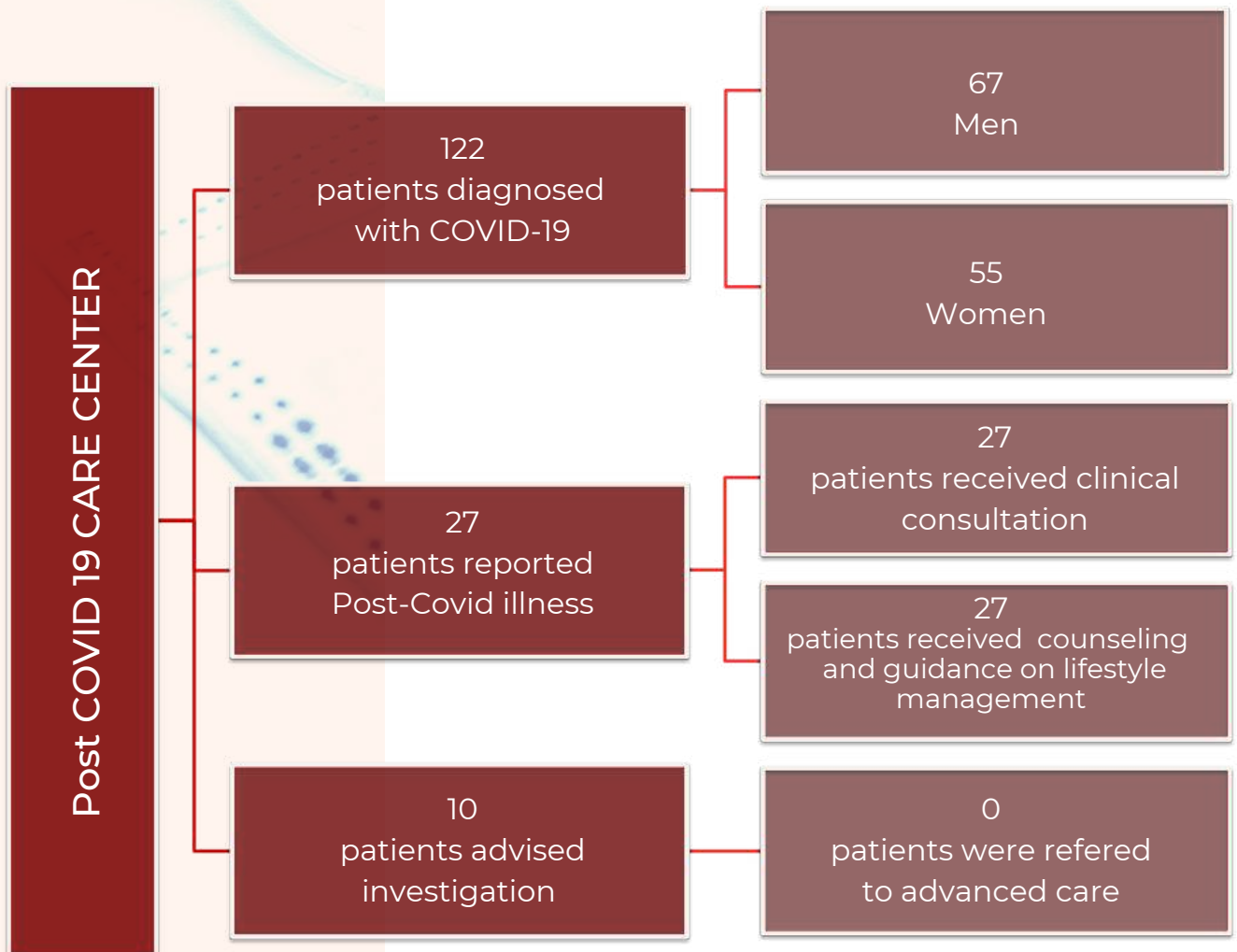


Registration	Number
PLHIV ever registered at AC (adults and children)	8742
PLHIV-adults registered at AC	8056
CLHIV (Children living with HIV) registered at AC	686
New PLHIV registrations in AC during Apr 2021 till Mar 2022	116
PLHIV-Men newly enrolled in AC	63
PLHIV -Women newly enrolled in AC	50
PLHIV -TG newly enrolled in AC	1
CLHIV newly enrolled in AC	2
PLHIV followed in the respective financial year	2159

SERVICES PROVIDED

Post - COVID 19 care center

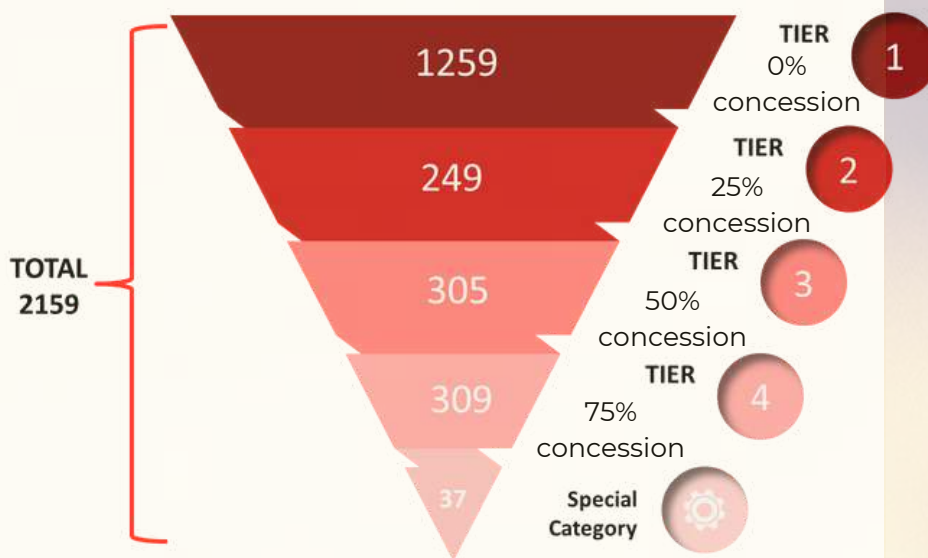
Many patients who recovered from Covid-19, are showing myriad of symptoms, such as excessive fatigue, breathlessness, cardiac problems, strokes, issues related to blood vessels and clotting, infections (bacterial, fungal such as candida and Mucormycosis), reactivation of dormant infections, etc. There are several mental health issues such as severe anxiety, depression, bereavement, grief, post-traumatic shock syndrome, obsessive compulsive disorders etc. PHG, with its vast experience of dealing with issues related to HIV epidemic and its last one year's experience of dealing with Covid 19 pandemic, started a post-Covid Care Center in August 2021 to provide comprehensive care (Medical management and counseling support). The number of patients who availed the services is given in the following figure.



SERVICES PROVIDED

Affordable Antiretroviral Therapy for Adults [Sakav Program]

SAKAV was started by PHG in 2006 to provide ART at an affordable cost. It is a self-sustaining graduated cost recovery program under which every patient receives medicines at lower prices than in the market. Tier 1 patients pay the 100% amount which is still highly subsidized compared to market price and tier 4 the minimum. The number of cases recorded in the financial year 21-22 are provided below along with their tier-wise distribution.



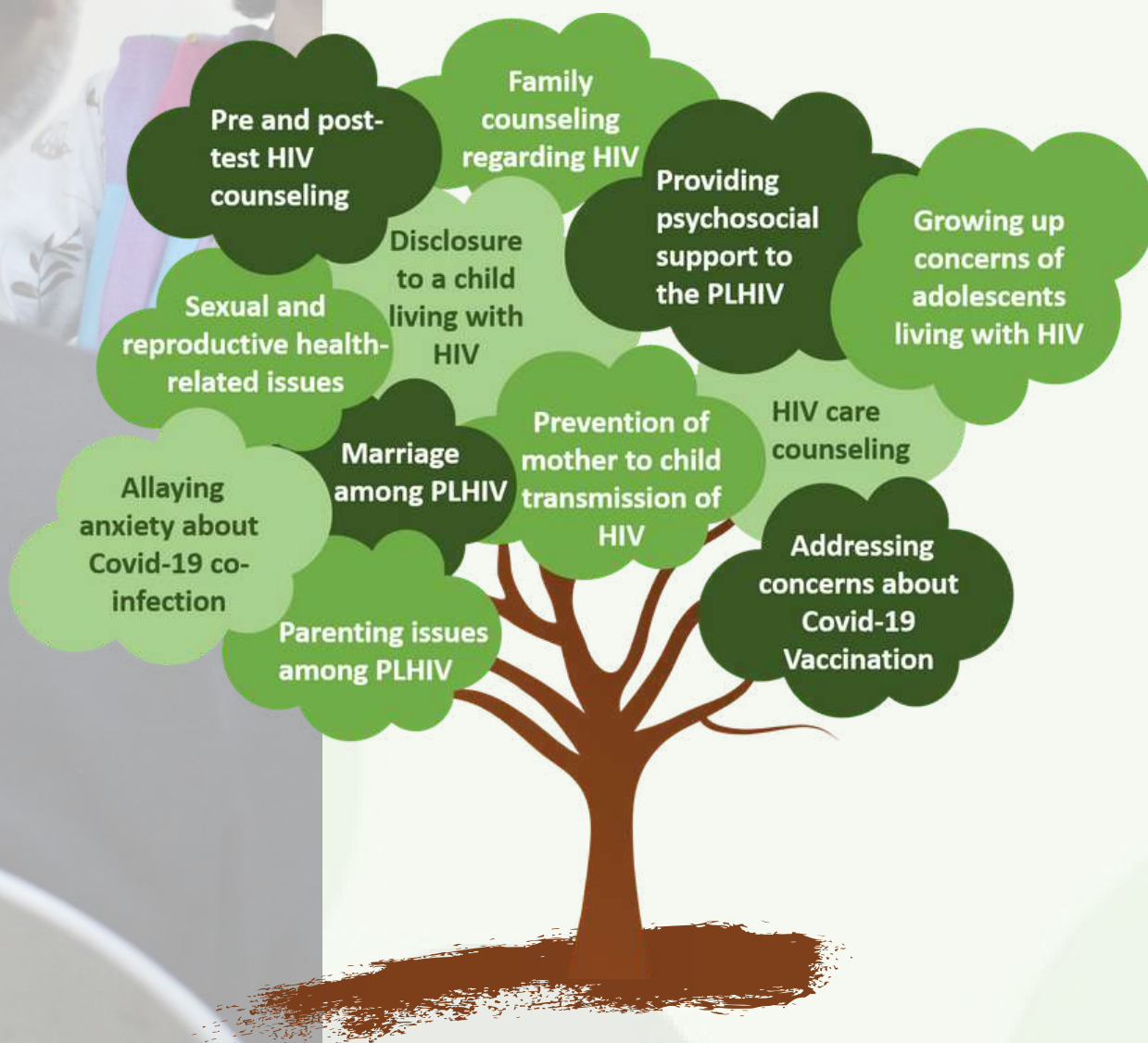
Free HIV care and ART for Children [Child Care Program]

Under child care program Prayas provides consultations, medicines, and investigations; free or with partial support to children living with HIV whose parents cannot afford the charges. It is provided until they complete 18 years. It is a self-funded program. The resources are generated through individual donations from well-wishers. The enrolment for this financial year is shown in the digram.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Prayas Counseling Center

In 1998 Prayas started a counseling center with the goal to address the psychological needs of PLHIV. It is offered free of cost. Counselors address a range of concerns in the clinic, some of which are mentioned in the diagram. Prayas has also developed reader-friendly educational material addressing various issues of HIV care, which is also used to support counseling.



SERVICES PROVIDED

Prayas Health Laboratory

PHG established the PRAYAS Health laboratory in 2007 to provide diagnostic and prognostic tests required to manage HIV at subsidized rates.

TESTS CONDUCTED IN THE YEAR 21-22

Name	Prayas Amrita clinic	Other Projects	Total
Anti-HIV	205	10	215
CD4	1462	899	2361
HIV viral load	1627	36	1663
Routine ART monitoring test	1828	57	1885
HBsAg	335	10	345
HCV	253	10	263
VDRL	299	--	299
HIV DNA PCR	15	--	15
Abacavir Sensitivity test	16	--	16
Drug resistance (PI+ RT+ II)	03	--	03
Drug resistance (PI +RT)	06	--	06
Drug resistacne (RT)	28	--	28
Urine analysis	356	57	413
Lipid profile	807	57	864
HbA1c	200	--	200
Sr. Electrolytes	941	--	941



SERVICES PROVIDED

Cervical cancer screening services in the community for the low and middle-income strata

Cervical cancer screening and treatment of screen positives is established for women particularly in the low- and middle-income strata. Prayas along with Live Life Love Life Charity Foundation has been spreading awareness and organizing screening camps for cervical cancer prevention since Nov 2016. In last year 2999 women were screened using an HPV test and 85 women were given treatment according to WHO guidelines. The HPV tests were provided free of cost to Prayas by iShareFoundation and GenepathDx under their Aban Gharda initiative.



Cervical Cancer Prevention and Screening

Prayas has a dedicated clinic where services such as cervical cancer screening, colposcopy, biopsy and appropriate treatment for cervical precancer and Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination are provided either free of cost to women enrolled in the projects or at extremely affordable costs. The number of cases recorded in the financial year 21-22 is as follows.

184



Colposcopy

78



Biopsies

81



Thermal ablation treatments

22



Lower Loop Excision of Transformation Zone (LLETZ)

36



HPV vaccination

Intervention Projects



Youth and Resilience, Empowerment and Edutainment (YaREE) Project.

Since 2019, the 'YaRee' project has been implemented in Maharashtra. The project aims to reach adolescents and youth living with HIV (A/YLHIV) and increase their agency and knowledge regarding HIV, sexuality, and relationships. It is funded by Keep A Child Alive (KCA), a non-profit organisation. Below mentioned are some highlights of the project from previous financial year 21-22.



37 Meetings with state/district AIDS control and prevention units and NGOs/CBOs



788 Outreach through Virtual groups and workshops

Discussion on HIV, ART, COVID vaccination, mental health, Social benefit schemes



90 participants attended a workshop e-platform in collaboration with FPA and NMP+

Topics- HIV and disclosure, stress management, ART



230 Adolescents and youth served through 9 e-workshop

Digital aids were created and e-workshops were designed.



116 One-to-one counseling sessions

Concerns-marriage, COVID, vaccination, wish to have a baby



397 participants on a virtual community platforms developed via Whatsapp

Monthly meeting to discuss HIV related concerns, 8 meetings conducted.

Intervention Projects



Free mobile voice call service for improvement of maternal and child health indicators. (mMitra Project)

PHG is implementing mMitra project since 2016 in Pune Municipal corporation and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation. It is a free mobile voice call service that provides timed and culturally appropriate comprehensive information to pregnant women and women with children under one year of age (women) to reduce maternal and infant mortality and morbidity in the urban poor. It is funded by ARMAAN, a non-profit organisation based in Mumbai.

Private and Public sector	Number of facilities	Number of women enrolled
Private trust hospitals	04	2922
PMC, PCMC maternity homes	19	16828
Total	23	19750

01

Conducted awareness and training sessions on COVID 19 for Arogya Sakhi

02

Online consultation was initiated for pregnant women during the lockdown

03

Provided referral and linkages to women as per need

04

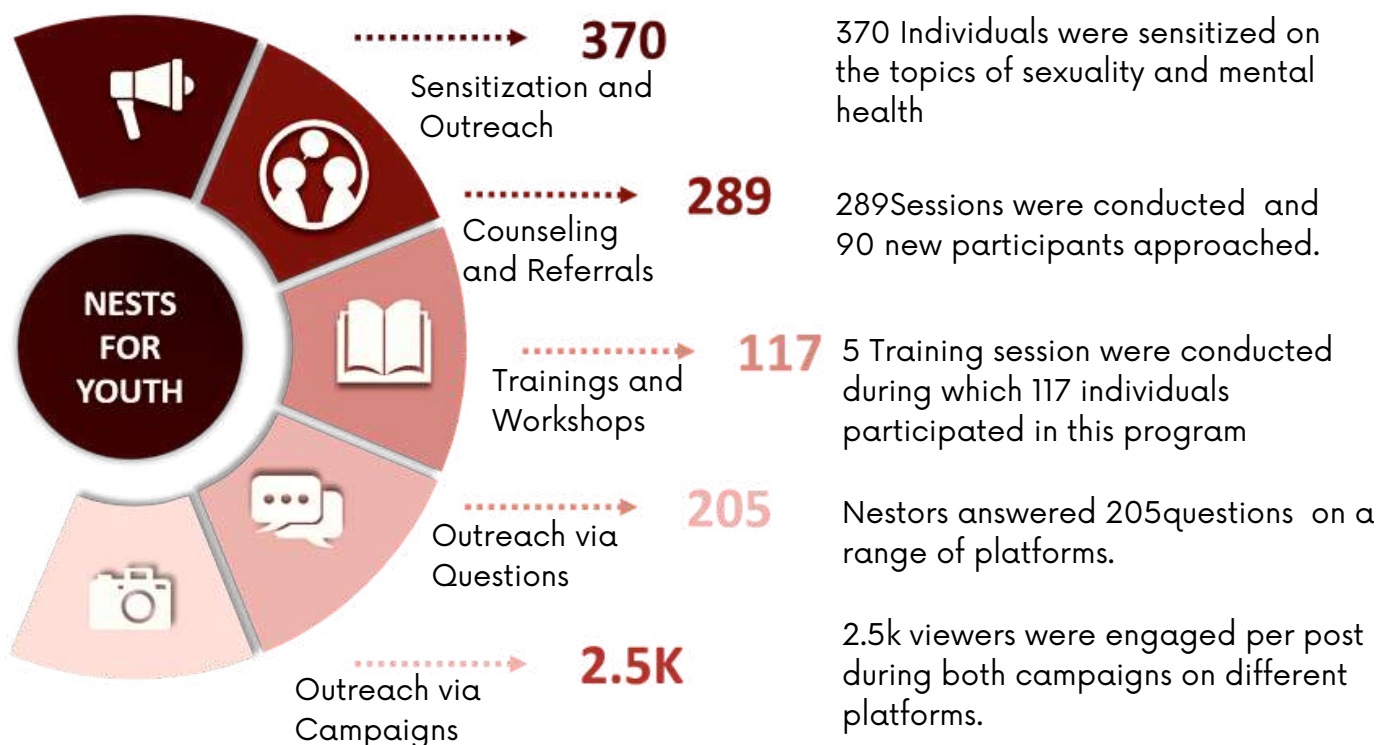
ARMAAN conducted capacity building session on Infant Young Child feeding Practices (IYCF) for Sakhi's

Intervention Projects



NESTS for Youth: Non-judgmental, Empowering, Self-reflective, and Technology-assisted Spaces (NESTS)

NESTS is a service designed for adults to seek mental health and sexual health support. Currently, we are in the process of developing a comprehensive training module for counselors to have a holistic understanding of sexual health. The training module aims to equip mental health practitioners to include sexuality in counseling in a more mindful and considerate manner.



Ongoing research

Dolutegravir Phase IV clinical trial

Study title: Multicenter, non-randomized, non-controlled, open-label Phase IV trial to evaluate the safety, tolerability and Effectiveness of Dolutegravir 50 mg tablet of Emcure Pharmaceuticals along with other antiretroviral among HIV-1 Infected subjects.

Prayas site Principal Investigator- Dr. Vinay Kulkarni

Funding support- Emcure Pharmaceuticals

National AIDS Research Institute is conducting this study through 10 sites all over India. PHG is one of the sites for this study. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the safety and to assess the effectiveness of Dolutegravir in causing HIV-1 suppression in combination with other ARVs in HIV-1 infected subjects. Enrollment in the study was completed in Feb 2022, and six-month follow-ups of enrolled participants are going on.

Participants	Numbers
Participants screened	64
Participants enrolled	62
Participants failed to screen	02
Participants withdrew/expired from study	04
Participants completed study follow ups	53
Participants currently following	05

Ongoing research

Breast cancer screening

Study title: A pilot study for breast cancer screening by clinical breast examination (CBE) and iBreastExam (iBE) for early detection of breast cancer

Principal Investigator: Dr Smita Joshi, Senior Scientist, Prayas

Co-investigators: Dr. Shekhar Kulkarni, Consultant Breast Surgeon

Funding support: Atlas Copco Charitable Foundation

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide and among women in India. Mammography screening is the mainstay of breast cancer screening in the high-income countries however such organized screening programmes are extremely difficult/ expensive to implement in the low- and middle-income countries. Hence alternative screening strategies must be evaluated. iBreastExam is a new technology that is approved by the USFDA and is approved in India. We are conducting a research study to evaluate the diagnostic performance characteristics of Clinical Breast Examination (CBE) and iBreastExam for the early detection of breast cancer. The study was initiated in Jan 2020. Up to March 2022, we have screened 5500 women and 6 breast cancers have been detected. Women diagnosed with breast cancer have been linked to treatment. The study enrollment is ongoing.

Ongoing research

Colorectal cancer screening

Study title: The Colorectal Cancer Screening Pilot Demonstration Project in Pune, India

Principal Investigator: Dr Smita Joshi, Senior Scientist, Prayas

Co-investigators: Dr Parimal Lawate, Gastroenterologist & Dr Vinay Kulkarni, Director, Prayas

Funding support: Live Life Love Life Charity Foundation

In India, colorectal cancer (CRC) incidence rates are on the rise over the last two decades. Most of the reported cases of cancers are diagnosed at very advanced stages when curative therapies are less effective. No organized screening program for colorectal cancer has been organized in India. Given the increasing risk of CRC in India, there is a necessity to evaluate the feasibility and accuracy of CRC screening implemented through public health services as a potential CRC prevention and control initiative in the country. Most CRCs occur in pre-existing adenomatous polyps in the intestine; colonic polyps, particularly advanced adenomas, may become cancerous and spread to other areas. The progression of adenomatous polyps takes in average 10 years in most people, therefore, early detection and removal of polyps in the colon and rectum may prevent the development of invasive colorectal cancer. We initiated a colorectal cancer screening project in Pune city in June 2021 with the objective to evaluate the acceptability, feasibility, organization, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of CRC screening in a cross-sectional study involving the general population in the Pune city to guide the eventual large-scale scaling up of CRC screening in high-risk regions of the country. As of end of March 22, we have consented 3093 men and women aged 50 to 75.

Ongoing research

Community based HIV testing Program in India

Study title: Assessment of Community Based HIV Testing program in Maharashtra, India

Principal Investigator: Dr Ritu Parchure, Senior Scientist, PHG

Funding Support: Indian Council of Medical Research

From March to December 2021, PHG undertook this evaluation study which assessed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on community-based screening for HIV in Maharashtra. Community-Based Screening for HIV (CBS) is primarily used in Targeted Intervention (TI) and Link Worker Scheme (LWS) of HIV programs to reach the unreached population. TI/LWS programs cater to populations that are at higher risk of acquiring HIV (such as female sex workers (FSW), men having sex with men (MSM), transgender (TG), migrants, and truckers).

The study used mixed methods approach. Qualitative data were collected from 30 TI organizations across ten districts and LWS data from four districts (54 in-depth interviews and 13 Focus Group Discussions). Through qualitative inquiry, the study tried to understand the challenges faced by the TI/LWS programs in reaching out to communities and undertaking HIV screening, as well as the responses by the program to adapt to the situation. The secondary analysis of TI/LWS program data (April 2018 to March 2021) was undertaken to understand how program outcomes were affected (the number of HIV tests done, HIV positives detected, and new registrations in the program).

Study findings revealed that the HIV screening declined to a minimal level during the lockdown period. The longitudinal analysis of testing data showed that CBS played a central role in the recovery of HIV screening in the TI program. Throughout the pandemic, the staff of TI/LWS organizations owned up the responsibility of safeguarding their community. Beyond HIV services, they voluntarily catered to the community's diverse needs. This study's incidental yet important observation is that new and increased HIV vulnerabilities have set in due to economic disruptions. These will have to be addressed urgently by the HIV programs. To conclude, the TI/LWS program will need a continued focus on reaching unreached populations. CBS will play a crucial role in this. However, robust monitoring mechanisms will be required to harness its full potential. In the future, it will be important for TI/LWS programs to continue investing in community engagement, encouragement, and nurturing (capacity building).

On 10th February 2022, the PHG team disseminated this study's findings to officials from the Maharashtra State AIDS Control Society (MSACS) and Technical Support Unit at the MSACS office, Mumbai.

Here is the link to the final report of this study
[Impact of COVID-19 on Community-Based HIV Screening in Maharashtra](#)

Ongoing research

Cervical cancer prevention among HIV infected women

Study title: Evaluation of 2 service delivery algorithms: 'screen with an HPV test and treat' or 'screen with an HPV test followed by VIA and treat' for prevention of cervical intra-epithelial neoplasia in HIV-infected women attending NACO ART centers in Pune, India

Principal Investigator: Dr. Smita Joshi, Senior Scientist, Prayas

Co-investigators: Dr. Vinay Kulkarni, Coordinator, Prayas

Funding support: Indian Council of Medical Research

The study was initiated in June 2020. This is a randomized open label trial evaluating 2 screening algorithms suggested by the WHO when screening is done with an HPV test. The 2 algorithms are 'screen and treat' or 'screen, triage and treat'. Women who tested HPV positive were invited to enroll and were randomly assigned to either of the 2 treatment delivery options. All HPV positive women in both the arms underwent a repeat HPV test after 1 year to compare the HPV clearance rate. The follow-up of this study has been completed.



Workshops/Trainings/meetings

Awareness session on Covid vaccination – Myths and Facts
6-11 May 2021

By Dr. Trupti Darak
200 Participants
Organized by Lighthouse, Connecting NGO

Online symposium Turn it on - sexual health in the digital world
8th Sept 2021

By Dr. Vinay Kulkarni
800 Participants
Organized by Symbiosis center for emotional well-being

Training workshops
Integrating Sexuality into counseling
8-12 Dec 2021

By Dr. Shirish Darak, Maitreyee Kulkarni
30 participants
Organized by Prayas Health group

Quarterly meeting of the HIV prevention NGO Network (HPNN)
11 Feb 2022

By Ms. Vijaya Jori
10 organisations
Topics- HIV-related issues and collective problem solving

Training sessions- Sexuality and mental health
Jan and March 2022

Dr. Shirish Darak, Maitreyee Kulkarni
45 participants
For counselors at Maitri helpline, M. A. Psychology students at SP college

Publications in print media

- Article on समाजहिताच्या कामाचा प्रयास in Maharashtra Times by Dr. Vinay & Sanjeevani Kulkarni, 14/06/2021
- Article on लैंगिक आरोग्याचे करायचे काय? in Lokmat by Dr. Ritu Parchure, 24/05/2021

Published articles



Love, sex, and commitment: relationship choices and trajectories among unmarried youth in India (2022)

Authors-Shrinivas Darak, Ritu Parchure, Trupti Darak & Vinay Kulkarni

Journal- Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters,

DOI:0.1080/26410397.2022.2031833



Mapping HIV risk trajectories from adolescence to young adulthood: a life-course study among unmarried urban Indian youth (2021)

Authors-Ritu Parchure, Shrinivas Darak, Trupti Darak & Vinay Kulkarni

Journal- AIDS care

DOI:10.1080/09540121.2021.1985718

Information Education Communication

Frequently asked questions during COVID about mental health

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DURING COVID TIMES ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

By Somya Duggal

FAMILY

HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY TEENS DURING COVID?

- Understand and validate their feelings and discuss how you both can work towards solutions.
- Give them a place to talk about their feelings without them fearing judgment allows them to be able to do things that will help them socialize online.
- Support them during online school, help them build a schedule or routine, and understand that there are a lot of stressors and pressures that come with online school (especially if it's a crucial year).
- Statements that would help teens open up are: It seems like something is bothering you... do you want to talk about it? What can I do to help? I want to let you know I'm here to talk if you want to. I know there are aspects of your life you don't share but I am still here to listen but it's okay if you want to keep some things private.
- Discuss COVID and how you will approach it as a family, set clear boundaries that go for every house member.
- GET HELP WHEN you see major changes in sleeping patterns, eating patterns, isolating more than usual, signs of self-harm, or decreased interest in previously enjoyed activities.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY PARENTS DURING COVID?

- Understand that they are humans too and they need support just as much as teens do.
- Statements that may help them (feel heard or open up): It seems like something is bothering you... do you want to talk about it? What can I do to help? I want to let you know I'm here to talk if you want to. I know there are aspects of your life you don't share but I am still here to listen but it's okay if you want to keep some things private.
- Help every opportunity you get to, even, small things such as cleaning or doing the dishes.
- Try and save money, some households may be going through a rough financial time but parents don't want to worry their children.
- Encourage them to take out time to do things that will help their mental health such as meditation, going on walks, or talking to their friends.
- Spend time with and express your appreciation for them.
- GET HELP WHEN you see major changes in sleeping patterns, eating patterns, isolating more than usual, signs of self-harm, decreased interest in previously enjoyed activities.

HOW DO I DEAL WITH LIVING IN AN UNHEALTHY OR TOXIC HOUSEHOLD?



- Recognize whether your household is toxic or not, your feelings are valid - if you feel it is, then you need to treat it like one.
- Some toxic or toxic behavior might be (some signs to look for): verbal abuse (such as them calling you names, gaslighting (a form of manipulation which makes you question the validity of your own thoughts), manipulation, or extreme criticism), Physical abuse (such as inappropriate touching, sexual abuse, or physical violence).
- Understand what you want from that relationship and set boundaries- this may be not talking to them or not including them in things you know they will react poorly to.
- Try to detach yourself, or take time away from situations you don't want a part of. You can be conversations or family situations where you feel anxious or stressed.
- "Make a plan - If you're trying to stay clear of toxicity, try getting in the habit of deciding beforehand what topics you want to avoid, brainstorming ways to change the subject, answering a provoking or prying question with another question, letting family members know you don't want to discuss certain topics" <https://www.healthline.com/health/your-family-who-to-avoid>

<h4 style="text-align: center;">HOW DO I DEAL WITH SOMEONE IN MY LIFE ABUSING SUBSTANCES?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help recognize this behavior and express your concern. Help understand how they feel and why they resorted to this coping mechanism. Some people will deny this behavior because they feel scared or ashamed. Do not get mad or lecture them - they may be afraid to open up later on if you have a negative reaction to them being vulnerable. Encourage them to ask for help (or get them some with their consent). Help them with recovery and adjust expectations. Remember that this is not about you - don't make them feel like they are embarrassing you but reassure them that your intentions are to help them. 	<h4 style="text-align: center;">HOW DO I KNOW WHEN IT BECOMES A PROBLEM?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If this substance starts to affect your everyday life and activities it is a problem. If you feel ashamed, try to hide your habits, and/or use substances to cope or respond to everyday things, it causes you to neglect work or home life, drinking to relax.
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TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

A certain amount of stress is normal part of daily life. Small doses of it can be helpful. But when it becomes overwhelming and prolonged the risk for mental health and medical problems increases.



Mental Health

<h4 style="text-align: center;">What is it?</h4> <p>Mental health is the way we think and feel. It is our ability to deal with ups and downs.</p>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">Why is it important?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It affects how we feel in our day to day life. It influences our productivity. It helps us build positive personal relationships. It helps us to cope with negative events.
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Language Matters

While talking about mental health some words are used interchangeably. Understanding the differences between them can help us seek appropriate treatment. By using incorrect term one risks dramatizing minor concerns or oversimplifying major problems.

Mental Distress

Refers to the common, expected, and normal response to the stresses of everyday life. Mental distress is normal, expected, and happens to everyone.

Mental Health Problem

Refers to a situation resulting from prolonged stress where our ability to adapt is hampered. It is more intense than mental distress but does not require intense medical treatment.

Mental Disorder

Refers to clinically diagnosed illnesses. Mental disorder requires evidence-based treatments provided by properly trained health care providers.

Mental Health awareness IED for internal use of Prayas organization

This material was created by intern Somya Duggal during her intership in June 2021.

Internal committee - IC report

Internal Committee (A committee for the prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace): The committee has been formed as a statutory requirement for non-governmental organizations in view of providing support that is accessible to people in the organization in case of the possibility of any sexual exploitation.

This committee is common for all groups of PRAYAS organizations. Each group has a representation in the committee. Sexual harassment grievances would be dealt with based on the related Supreme Court guidelines and judgment on sexual harassment. PRAYAS has its anti-sexual harassment policy.

MEMBERS

Ms. Vijaya Jori (PHG representative and chairperson)

Ms. Preeti Karmarkar (External member)

Adv. Vrushali Vaidya (External member)

Ms. Aparna Joshi (Representative of Prayas trust office)

Mr. Shirish Darak (Prayas Health Group representative)

Mr. Abhiram Sahasrabudhe (Prayas Energy Group representative)

Ms. Shweta Kulkarni (Prayas Energy Group representative)

Title	Numbers
Number of complaints received during the year	00
Number of complaints disposed during the year	00
Number of cases pending more than 90 days	00
Action taken by the employer	NA
Number of workshops or awareness programs conducted for the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace (New member sensitization - 13, Sensitization sessions – 3 "/ IC discussion' / Sexual harassment at workplace)	13 +3 (16)

Representation on committees

Dr. Sanjeevani Kulkarni

Representative of ICC of the National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) and National Institute of Virology (NIV)

Dr. Vinay Kulkarni

Gene Path Dx Laboratory
Member of ethics committee for research

Ms. Vijaya Jori

(Community Advisory Board member)
Clinical Trial Unit, B. J. Medical College
Member of Global Community Advisory Board,
AIDS Clinical Trial Group, Washington, USA

Dr. Shirish Darak

Task force member of "Towards
Multidimensional Indicators of Child
Growth and Development" International
union for nutrition.

