

Module 2: Integration of HIV Rapid Testing in HIV Prevention and Treatment Programs



Learning Objectives

- Recognize the need for HIV testing and counseling (T&C) in HIV prevention programs
- Describe the role of HIV rapid testing in supporting prevention and counseling programs
- State the advantages of using HIV rapid tests in specific settings (e.g., VCT and PMTCT programs)
- Describe the programs/settings where HIV rapid tests are used in your country



Content Overview

- Need for expanding access to HIV testing
- Testing and counseling as an integral part of HIV prevention, care and support services
- Client counseling and HIV rapid testing are a formidable combination in any HIV prevention strategy



HIV/AIDS Program Strategy

“Innovative solutions must be found to dramatically increase the number of individuals who are tested and know their status.”

- Development, implementation, and evaluation of new, highly efficient and effective models
- Scaling up of current testing and counseling services



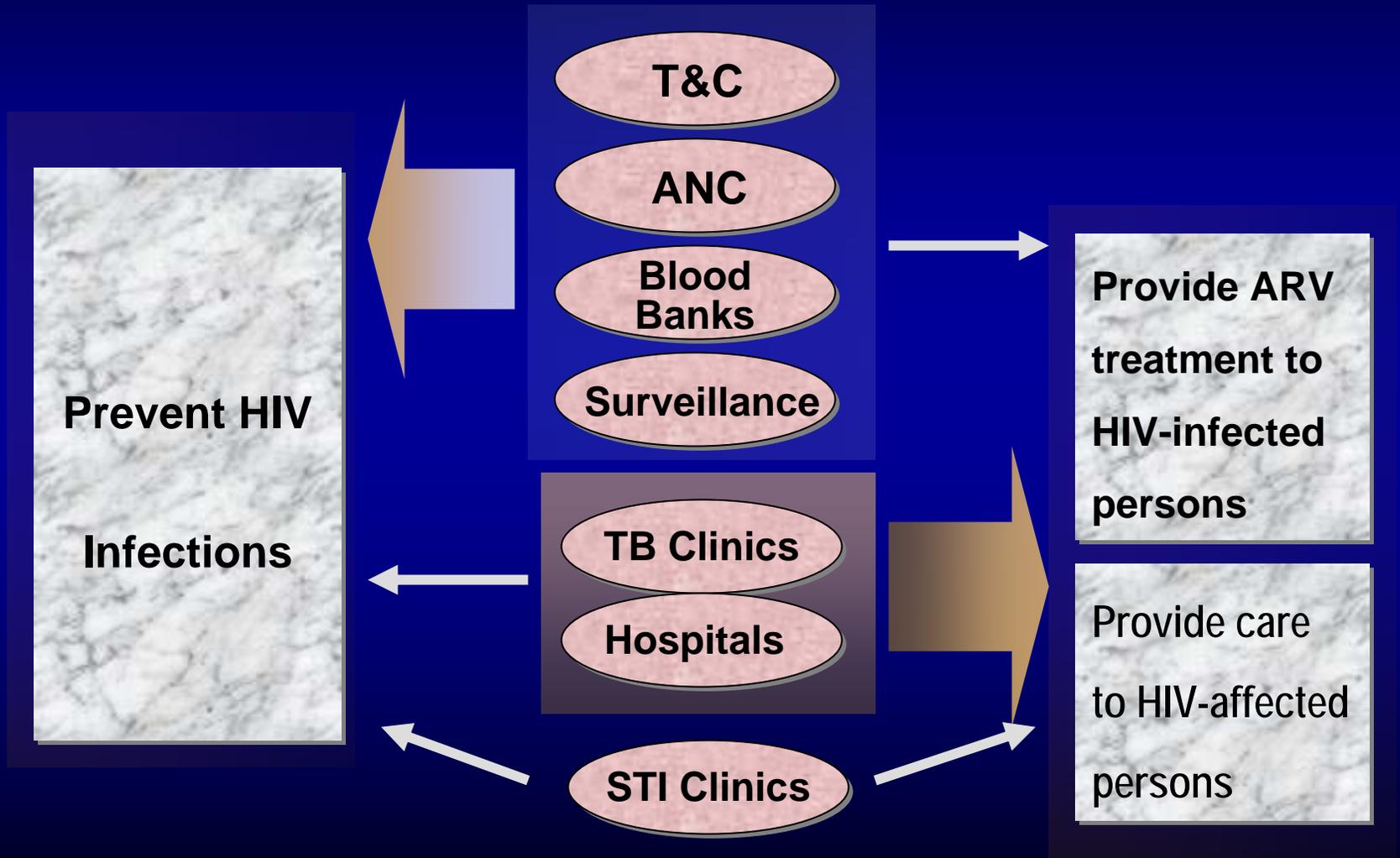


Current Status of HIV Testing

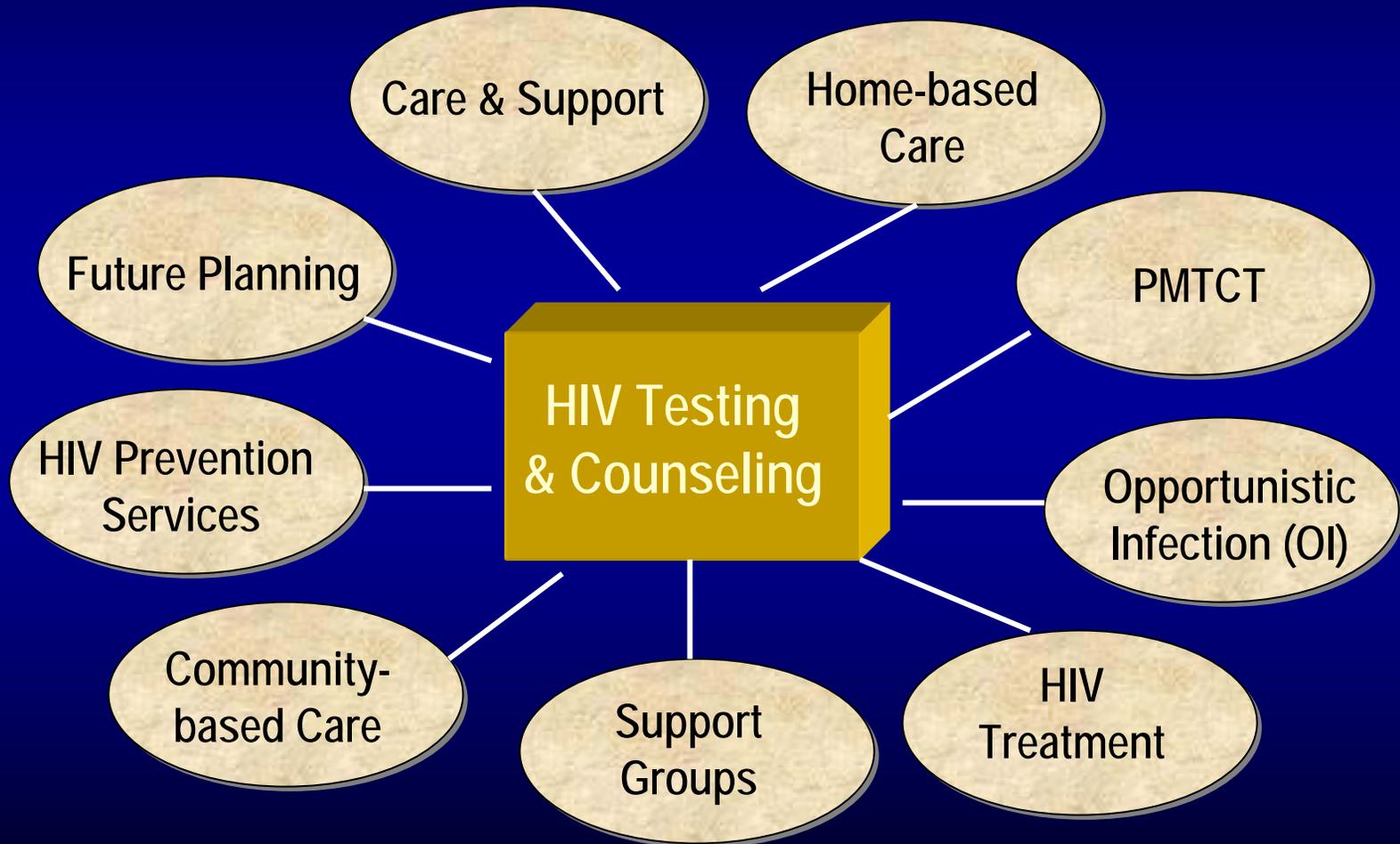
- 95% of the 40 million HIV infected people worldwide do not know they are infected
- Only 5-10% of population in many countries have ever had an HIV test; less than 10% of all pregnant women have received an HIV test
- Where HIV testing is more widely available, no more than 10% of health care facilities offered testing and counseling in 2002



HIV Testing Occurs in a Variety of Settings



HIV T&C As An Entry Point to HIV Prevention, Care and Support Services



Testing and Counseling

Self-initiated HIV testing and prevention counseling, primarily offered in free-standing sites

- Rapid testing can be used to advantage
- Opportunity for pre-test and post-test counseling
- Persons voluntarily seeking testing and counseling are most ready for change and prevention messages
- Immediate test results hasten care/treatment for HIV infected persons
- As demand for testing increases, VCT model may not meet country's need





Clinic-Based HIV Testing and Counseling

Persons attending clinics (ANC, STI, TB) are routinely offered HIV testing and counseling

- HIV Rapid testing easy to implement
- Right to refuse HIV test offered (i.e., opt out)
- High rates of HIV infected persons identified
- Linkage to treatment and care facilitated





Community-Based Testing and Counseling

Outreach provided through churches, workplace, youth programs, military, etc.

- People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) are essential to supporting community-based programs
- Often includes training of lay persons in community to offer testing and counseling
- Difficulties: supervision; quality assurance; confidentiality; linkage to care and treatment





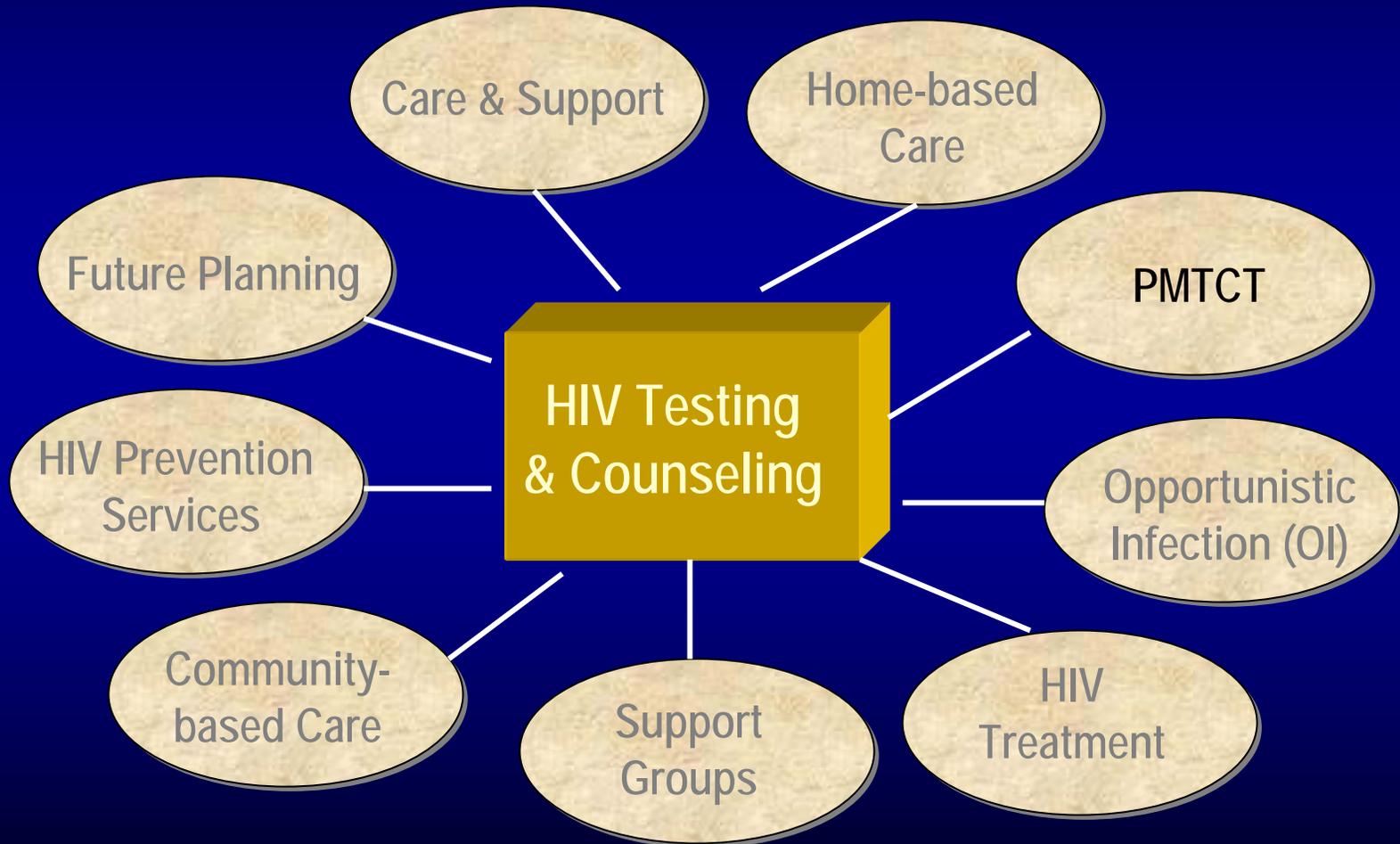
Couples Testing and Counseling

Intervention in which sexual partners are counseled as a couple (e.g., VCT, PMTCT sites)

- HIV T&C of discordant couples is a highly effective prevention intervention
- Facilitates disclosure and joint planning for risk reduction
- Increases utilization of care and treatment may increase if the partner knows about and supports the infected person
- Allows for planning and care of children based on serostatus of both parents



HIV T&C As An Entry Point to HIV Prevention, Care and Support Services





Mother-to-Child HIV Infections

- 2,000 new infections each day worldwide
- Over 90% are in resource-poor settings
- About 90% of HIV-positive pregnant women in resource-poor settings have no access to testing and do not know their HIV-status

Preventing Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT)

PMTCT is part of a comprehensive approach that consists of 4 elements:

- **Element 1:** Primary prevention of HIV infection in women
- **Element 2:** Prevention of unintended pregnancies among women infected with HIV
- **Element 3:** Prevention of HIV transmission from HIV infected mothers to their infants
- **Element 4:** Provision of treatment, care and support to women infected with HIV, their infants and their families



Core Interventions for PMTCT

Transmission risk can be reduced by at least 50% through feasible, affordable interventions

- HIV Rapid testing and counselling
- Antiretroviral treatment
- Safer delivery practices
- Safer infant-feeding practices



Core PMTCT Interventions Depend on a Woman Knowing Her HIV Status

HIV testing and counselling (T&C) services:

- Play a vital role in identifying women who are HIV-positive
- Reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission
- Provide comprehensive HIV/AIDS treatment & care to mother, infant and family members
- Help HIV-negative and HIV-positive women take risk-reduction steps



Rationale for Promoting HIV Rapid Tests for PMTCT

- Blood samples can be tested at antenatal clinic (ANC) or labour and delivery (L&D) ward
- Increase number of women that receive test results & counselling services
- Immediate availability of interventions for pregnant HIV-positive women
- Reduce HIV transmission to infants by testing pregnant women with unknown HIV status before or just after delivery and initiating ARV intervention
- Eliminate need to track down results from an outside lab
- Reduce risk of specimen mix-up or misplacement



Current International Recommendations for Testing and Counseling in PMTCT

- Group pre-test information and individual pre-test counseling at ANC clinic
- Routinely recommending HIV testing and counseling for pregnant women at ANC and at L&D
- **Rapid testing** with same-day result at ANC and at L&D
- Individual post-test counseling and encouraging partner testing

Source: WHO's draft CT for PMTCT (2003), CDC's MMWR 2002; CDC's Dear Colleague letter (2003); Institute of Medicine. Reducing the odds. Preventing perinatal transmission of HIV in the United States. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999



Summary

- What are venues for HIV testing and counseling?
- What are the advantages of using HIV rapid testing at these venues?
- What are special advantages of using HIV rapid testing in PMTCT?