



Watch HIV Researchers at CROI 2024 Discuss Prevention Options and More

Yale's LaRon Nelson joins HIV.gov at science conference #CROI2024 to talk HIV prevention among Black queer men in the South.

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At the 2024 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI), HIV.gov caught up again with Dr. LaRon Nelson to discuss community-engaged research, HIV prevention at CROI, and a new study ([HPTN 096](#)) he is leading to reduce HIV rates among Black men who have sex with men (inclusive of cisgender and transgender men) in the southern United States. Dr. Nelson is a Professor and Associate Dean at the Yale School of Nursing. He spoke with Louis Shackelford of the [HIV Vaccine Trials Network](#) for this HIV.gov interview. [Watch their conversation](#) (it's also posted at the top of this article).

Community-Engaged Research

The importance and significant benefits of involving community in all aspects of HIV research was the first topic Dr. Nelson and Louis discussed. "If we don't have community voices or engaged communities, we aren't going to be asking the right questions or designing the studies in the best ways that will produce the outcome that we need, and we won't end up with answers that are as relevant as they could be," Dr. Nelson observed. He pointed to the [dapivirine vaginal ring](#) as an example of better outcomes because communities were involved in research. He said he hopes that community engagement in research continues to become more and more common, but it requires that researchers be willing to listen and, when needed, change their plans based on what they hear from community.

HIV Prevention Research at CROI

Dr. Nelson highlighted some of the HIV prevention topics at CROI that have caught his attention, such as increasing equitable use of long-acting injectable forms of HIV PrEP and treatment among different populations and in different countries. Other discussions of interest have included early studies on potentially very long-acting forms of HIV PrEP and exploration of possible dual prevention tools that would provide users with both HIV PrEP and contraception.

HPTN 096 Study

Finally, Dr. Nelson discussed an example of community-informed research that will soon be underway: the NIH-supported study through the [HIV Prevention Trials Network](#) (HPTN) known as [HPTN 096](#). It aims to reduce HIV rates among Black men who have sex with men in the southern United States using a strategy developed based on what communities have told Dr. Nelson and colleagues is needed to do so. As a result, the study includes a package of four interventions which simultaneously address social, structural, institutional, and behavioral barriers to HIV prevention and care. HPTN 096 will soon launch in Atlanta, south Florida, Montgomery, Memphis, and Dallas.

About CROI

CROI is an annual scientific meeting that brings together leading researchers and clinical investigators from around the world to present, discuss, and critique the latest studies that can help accelerate global progress in the response to HIV and other infectious diseases, including STIs and viral hepatitis. More than 3,630 researchers from 73 countries are participating in Denver and virtually this year. Over 1,000 summaries of original research are being presented. Visit the [conference website](#) for more information. Abstracts, session webcasts, and e-posters will be published there for public access in 30 days.

More HIV Research Updates to Follow on HIV.gov

HIV.gov will be sharing additional video interviews from CROI 2024 with NIH's Dr. Carl Dieffenbach, CDC's Dr. Jono Mermin and Dr. Robyn Neblett Fanfair, and others. You can find all of them on HIV.gov's social media channels and recapped here on the blog.

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