

End user market segmentation, messaging and positioning for the Dapivirine Vaginal Ring: A Lesotho Case Study

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BACKGROUND

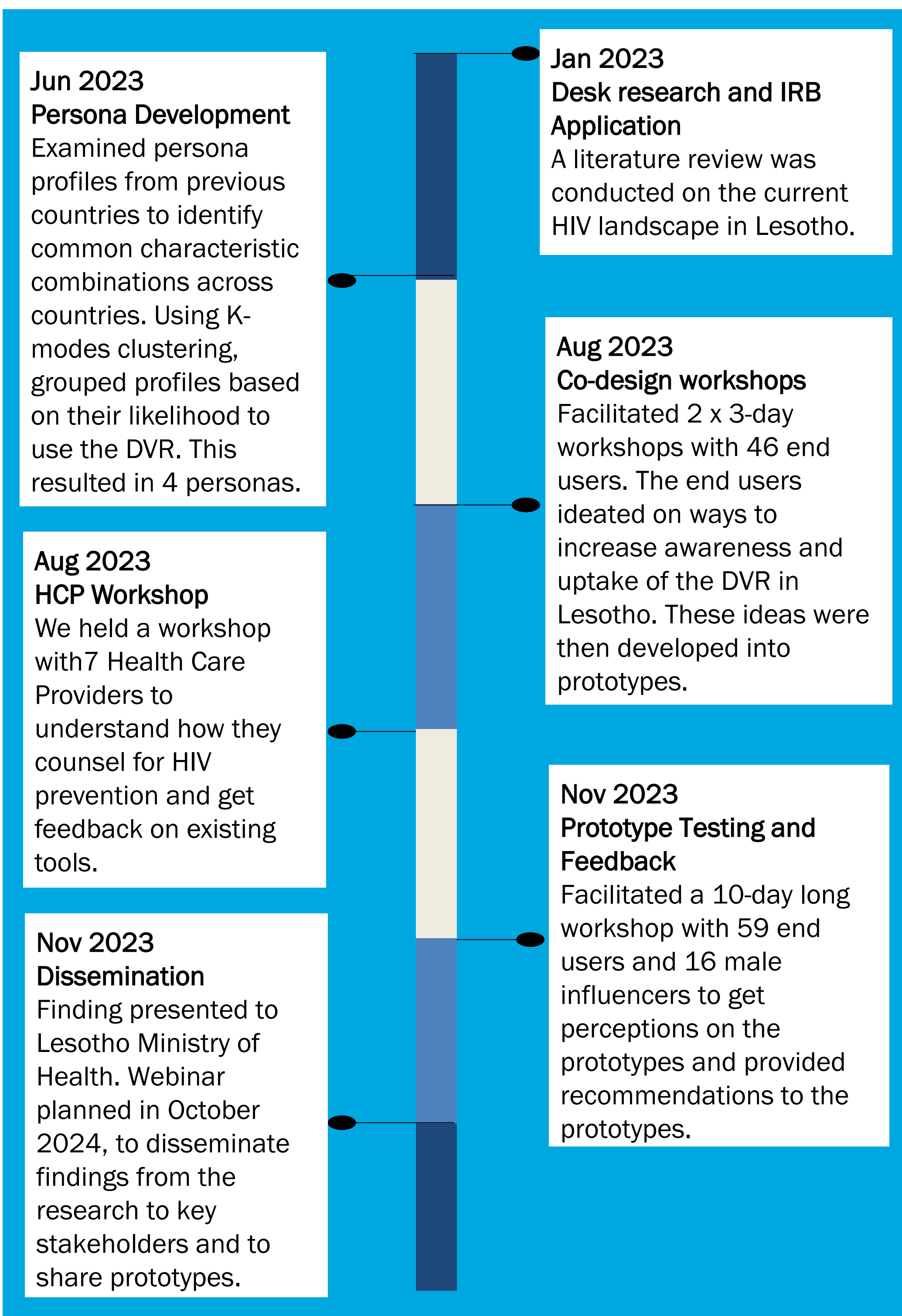


Lesotho has a generalized HIV epidemic. HIV infection in women is disproportionately higher as compared to men. This is especially evident in young women, highlighting the need for effective HIV prevention methods.

The dapivirine vaginal ring (DVR or PrEP Ring) marks a significant advancement as Lesotho's first approved long-acting, woman-controlled HIV prevention product. Understanding end-user perceptions and co-creating communication strategies for product usage are vital as implementation studies commence.

METHODS

This study employed human-centered design to develop community-led communication strategies in Maseru and Bera as follows:



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What did we find?

Segments

Based on diffusion of innovations theory 4 end-user segments were identified between the ages of 18-45



Perceived Common Motivators for DVR use

Method discretion, HIV protection, duration, self-administration and reduced stigma

Perceived Common Barriers for DVR use

Inability to self-administer, side effects and male partner disapproval

RESULTS

Foundational Insights

- Who is most in need of HIV prevention support:** young women as most affected by HIV
- Male partner influence:** men often make the decisions within households around sexual reproductive health
- Communications channels:** the internet, social media, radio and television are the most popular communication channels

Prototypes and Feedback

- Aware but lacks information on suitability:**
 - Posters:** preferred posters that featured men and trusted people (like HCP's), with a catchy phrase that calls out HIV protection and addresses concerns about DVR use.
 - Visuals in clinics:** using captivating videos in clinic waiting areas, with information on a range of HIV prevention methods to aid choice counselling.
 - Celebrity endorsements:** local celebrities and influencers hold influence particularly amongst young people and can empower people to consider using HIV prevention and was a strong motivator to use DVR.
- Interested but has concerns:**
 - Myth busting campaign:** concerns that DVR would have an impact on sexual pleasure and DVR being dislodged during sex were the most common myth amongst all ages. Having a myth busting campaign would help young people, as they are more likely to share myths about DVR over social media.
 - Information guides:** were liked by participants but felt that language could be simplified, and more images added to make the content easier to understand. This prototype was ranked low compared to others.
 - Talk to me Radio Show:** participants confirmed widespread listenership of radio shows in Lesotho, often addressing health issues. Radio shows were seen as a trusted source of information with the ability to ask questions anonymously.
- First use of DVR:**
 - DIY insertion guide:** participants valued the do it yourself guide because it enables them to use the DVR discreetly at their own comfort and convenience.
- Continued use of DVR:**
 - Digital chatbot:** Participants appreciated the ability to access information about DVR without the need to travel or wait for a response from a person. They saw it as a convenient, fast and accessible way to get answers to their questions.
- Getting support from others:**
 - Talking cards:** widespread approval for their effectiveness as conversation starters, as they allowed people to center their discussions around HIV, but some respondents found the cards to be excessively wordy, making them less engaging.

CONCLUSION

Through human-centered market research, the government and other key stakeholders have gained insights into end-user segments and preferred communication prototypes, which will facilitate the development of tailored messaging for DVR introduction that resonates with end-users and stakeholders to promote product awareness and uptake.