ViiV Healthcare commissioned an ethnographic research study, a social science methodology in which researchers immerse themselves in the lives of those they seek to understand. The study began with a comprehensive environment assessment to familiarize the research team with the daily life in Baltimore and Jackson and to establish an understanding about the contexts in which Black gay men operate—at home, in the clinic, and out in the world.

The research team interviewed 30 HIV- and HIV+ men, their friends, their family members, and their influencers. Interviewers spent one to two days with each man. The study team also interviewed civic leaders, business owners, healthcare providers, and others involved in the HIV care environment in these two cities, and conducted an extensive ethnographic research study in the community. The research team engaged with young adult men throughout the United States who identify as Black gay men. They conducted workshops, small group meetings, and one-on-one interviews to understand the experiences of men whose lives are shared by many other Black gay men. The findings from ACCELERATE! provide communities with education and resources to increase awareness of the current HIV treatment guidelines and standards of care available.

ACCELERATE! continues to deeply listen to a representative range of new and familiar voices in the community. It is guided by three key strategies to increase access to and retention in high-quality HIV prevention, care, and treatment for Black gay men:

1. **Make Sex Ed Relevant**: This strategy focuses on identifying and acting on the unmet needs of people living with HIV. We connect individuals and communities to help drive solutions focused on providing the voice of the HIV community, the most affected by HIV, to inform current paradigms and practices and improve the delivery of HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

2. **Boost Empowerment and Strengthen Networks**: This strategy supports men to seek and maintain access to and retention in high-quality HIV prevention, care, and treatment. An innovative approach means we go beyond developing new medicines. We seek insights to better understand the unmet needs of people living with HIV. ViiV Healthcare has connected the community, amplified key community and research insights, and supported new efforts that inspire and break down isolation and stigma, connect men to networks of support, and expand delivery of HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

3. **Activate for New Efforts**: This strategy focuses on engaging in new efforts that inspire and activate key community and research insights from ACCELERATE! to inform current paradigms and practices and improve the delivery of HIV prevention, care, and treatment. The voice of the HIV community informs everything we do.

ACCELERATE! will provide communities with education and resources to increase awareness of the current HIV treatment guidelines and standards of care available. It will also provide community members and networks with enhanced content for prevention, care, and treatment.

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In addition to these four opportunities, ViiV Healthcare is committed to improving the quality of care and expanding delivery of HIV prevention, care, and treatment.
The Motivation: What the Numbers Say

ACCELERATE! has emerged in response to two countervailing forces: the promise of the standard of care for HIV treatment and prevention, and the persistent, disproportionate impact of HIV on Black Americans—especially gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. Without improvements in the delivery of prevention, care, and treatment, it’s estimated that one in two Black gay men will become HIV-positive in their lifetimes.¹

» The Promise of the Standard of Care

- **Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)**
  Shown to reduce the rate of HIV transmission from a positive partner to a negative partner by 96%.²

- **Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)**
  Shown to lower the risk of HIV infection by more than 90% for those who took medicines consistently.³

- **Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)**
  Shown to reduce the risk of developing a serious health event by 54% for people who started treatment early.⁴

» Not All Black Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM) Benefit from the Standard of Care

- **HIV+ Black MSM Diagnosis**
  In the U.S., 1 in 3 Black MSM is living with HIV.⁵

- **HIV+ Black MSM who stay in care**
  Only 24% of Black MSM living with HIV in the U.S. stay in care.⁵

- **Viral suppression**
  Only 16% of Black MSM in the U.S. achieve viral suppression.⁵

Aligned with the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, ACCELERATE! is Viiv Healthcare’s four-year, $10 million commitment to fund innovative projects that support the health and well-being of Black gay men in two cities hardest hit by HIV—Baltimore, Maryland, and Jackson, Mississippi. ACCELERATE! was announced at the White House in conjunction with the 2015 National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

» HIV in Baltimore and Jackson

**Baltimore, MD**

- 10th highest HIV diagnosis rate in the nation in 2014⁶
- 13% of MSM were living with HIV in 2012⁷
- 19th highest death rate among men living with HIV in 2013⁹

**Jackson, MS**

- 4th highest HIV diagnosis rate in the nation in 2014⁶
- 39% of MSM were living with HIV, the highest in the nation, in 2012-2013⁸
- 7th highest death rate among men living with HIV in 2013⁹
Our Approach
ACCELERATE! is guided by three key strategies to increase access to and retention in high-quality HIV prevention, care, and treatment for Black gay men:

» **Listen**
  to men’s experiences and prioritize their perspectives to drive impact.

» **Activate**
  key community and research insights through collaborations and funding for new efforts that inspire and support men to seek and maintain quality healthcare.

» **Amplify**
  those insights and ongoing lessons from ACCELERATE! to inform current paradigms and practices and improve the delivery of HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

Listen
ViiV Healthcare is putting the perspectives of men most affected by HIV at the center of design, decision-making, and critical elements for success.

ACCELERATE! has connected with
300 BLACK GAY MEN & 60+ ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH
WORKSHOPS AND CONVENINGS
ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH
ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS
to understand the experiences of men and those who are working to support them.

ACCELERATE! continues to deeply listen to a representative range of new and familiar voices in the community.

» **Ethnographic Research: Meet Me Where I Want To Be**
ViiV Healthcare commissioned an ethnographic research study, a social science methodology in which researchers immerse themselves in the lives of those they seek to understand. The study began with a comprehensive environment assessment to familiarize the research team with the daily life in Baltimore and Jackson and to establish an understanding about the contexts in which Black gay men operate—at home, in the clinic, and out in the world.

The research team interviewed 30 HIV- and HIV+ men, their friends, their family members, and their influencers. Interviewers spent one to two days with each man. The study team also interviewed civic leaders, providers, and others involved in the HIV care environment in these two cities, and conducted an extensive review of media, images, and messages that shape the broader cultural conversation around HIV/AIDS.

Methodology
On the Surface  Information; description and perceptions
- How often do people visit the doctor?
- What percentage of men report using condoms?
- How do people rate their satisfaction at their clinics?
- How do people feel about side effects of treatment?

Below the Surface  Understanding; explanations and causalities
- Why do people visit the doctor?
- How do men choose whether to use a condom or not?
- Why don’t people switch clinics when they dislike them?
- Why do people decide to try a new treatment?
Identity: Men want to be treated as individuals and not as labels.

- Men construct their identities from many different aspects of their lives—their sexuality is often neither the sole nor the primary factor.
- Men want control over their identities to be true to themselves but allow for privacy.

Before Testing: Intimacy and trust are important for relationships, and condoms get in the way.

- Men want long-term, intimate relationships.
- Condoms are seen as a barrier to closeness.
- Condomless sex is seen as marking the transition to a serious relationship and proving trust in one’s partner.
- Participants were clear: If they didn’t know a partner well, they would always use a condom.

Testing: Testing negative is a critical opportunity for prevention strategies.

- HIV testing is widely available and accepted.
- For many, getting tested doesn’t necessarily mean being ready to act on the results.
- Many men do not leave testing with information on current prevention tools such as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and treatment as prevention (TasP).
- Without more engagement, testing negative becomes a “green light” for men to continue using their own prevention strategies.

Initiating Treatment: Men distance themselves from care when care doesn’t fit their needs.

- Men need and want different things from their care.
- Finding good care is difficult. Many men have been disappointed by their clinical interactions.
- For some men, seeking or staying in care does not fit the way they see themselves or “where they are going.”
- Almost every HIV+ man had been in some sort of care and had gone to the doctor at least once or twice.

Staying Engaged: Interruptions in care happen to everyone.

- Even under the best conditions, men go on and off treatment, and in and out of care.
- Once men are out of care or go off treatment, it is difficult to start again.
- Spiritual, social, and emotional support are positively associated with remaining in care.
Activate

Over the next several years, ACCELERATE! will activate key insights developed through the ethnographic research study and community discussions and will invest in four innovative opportunities that inspire and support men to seek and maintain quality healthcare.

» **Boost Empowerment and Strengthen Networks**
  to break down isolation and stigma, connect men to networks of support, and expand delivery of HIV prevention, care, and treatment.

» **Make Sex Ed Relevant**
  with enhanced content for adults that reflects today’s context and can be delivered in person and online.

» **Make Testing a Bridge to Prevention, Care, and Treatment**
  by piloting a revised protocol for men who test negative for HIV to better link them to healthcare, PEP and PrEP, and other community support services and networks.

» **Strengthen Navigation Services**
  that help guide men through complex systems and make it easier to enter and get back into care.

In addition to these four opportunities, ViiV Healthcare is committed to improving the quality of care and services for people living with and vulnerable to HIV. Through ACCELERATE!, ViiV Healthcare will provide communities with education and resources to increase awareness of the current HIV treatment guidelines and standards of care available.

Amplify

ACCELERATE! will amplify those key insights and ongoing lessons from our partnerships by elevating the perspectives of the men who are most affected by HIV. An external evaluation team from academic institutions in Baltimore and Jackson will help define and measure the progress and impact of the programs supported by ViiV Healthcare’s ACCELERATE!

At ViiV Healthcare, we hold ourselves and our partners accountable to the people and communities working to advance the response to HIV in Baltimore and Jackson. We will share the findings from ACCELERATE! nationally with the goal of helping Black men throughout the U.S. thrive in their communities.

ViiV Healthcare was established to take an innovative approach to the challenge of HIV—and we do. It’s who we are. An innovative approach means we go beyond developing new medicines. We seek insights to better understand the unmet needs of people living with HIV. We connect individuals and communities to help drive solutions focused on providing the same standard of care for all people living with HIV. We develop and support community programs that focus on HIV prevention, care, and treatment. The voice of the HIV community informs everything we do.

As the only company solely focused on HIV, we think differently, act differently, and connect differently to improve the lives and outcomes for all people affected by HIV.

To learn more, visit viivhealthcare.com/us and follow us @ViiVUS
Aligned with the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, ACCELERATE! is ViiV Healthcare’s four-year, $10 million initiative to increase access to and retention in high-quality HIV prevention, care, and treatment, it’s estimated that one in two Black gay men will become HIV-positive in their lifetimes.1

ACCELERATE! has emerged in response to two countervailing forces: the promise of the standard of care achieving viral suppression in 96% of people who started treatment early.4

Only 24% of Black MSM living with HIV are engaged in prevention and treatment as prevention (TasP).5

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)

Shown to lower the risk of HIV infection by more than 90% for those who start treatment early.4

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)

Connecting the Community. Advancing the HIV Response in Baltimore and Jackson.

Identity: Men want to be treated as individuals and not as labels.

Men want long-term, intimate relationships.

Condomless sex is seen as marking the transition to a serious relationship and proving trust in themselves but allow for privacy.

Finding good care is difficult. Many men have been interrupted in care and treatment as prevention (TasP).

Without more engagement, testing negative becomes a “green light” for men to continue using condoms.

Almost every HIV+ man had been in some sort of care in person and online.

Finding good care is difficult. Many men have been interrupted in care and treatment as prevention (TasP).

Without more engagement, testing negative becomes a “green light” for men to continue using condoms.

Before Testing: Intimacy and trust are important for relationships, and condoms get in the way.

Before: Intimacy and trust are important for relationships, and condoms get in the way.

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• Men want long-term, intimate relationships.

• Condomless sex is seen as marking the transition to a serious relationship and proving trust in themselves but allow for privacy.

• Finding good care is difficult. Many men have been interrupted in care and treatment as prevention (TasP).

• Without more engagement, testing negative becomes a “green light” for men to continue using condoms.

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Methodology

ACCELERATE! continues to deeply listen to a representative range of new and familiar voices in the community. The research team interviewed 30 HIV- and HIV+ men, their friends, their family members, and their influencers. Interviewers spent one to two days with each man. The study team also interviewed civic leaders, faith leaders, policy makers, community organizers, and others who have unique expertise, knowledge, and influence on the community. Interviewers and the study team led discussions, asked questions, and collaborated to ensure the discussions traced back to the experiences of the men in the study. The study team engaged with the men to understand the experiences of men and those who are working to support them.

CONVENINGS

WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES

300 BLACK GAY MEN

How often do people visit the doctor?

How do people rate their satisfaction at their clinics?

How do people feel about side effects of treatment?

Ethnographic Research: Meet Me Where I Want To Be

ViiV Healthcare commissioned an ethnographic research study, a social science methodology in which researchers immerse themselves in the lives of those they seek to understand. The study began with a listening session with 30 men from the community: gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men. The selected men were from communities with the highest rate of HIV diagnoses among Black gay men in the country. ViiV Healthcare is working to understand how best to engage Black gay men in care.

The research team interviewed 30 HIV- and HIV+ men, their friends, their family members, and their influencers. Interviewers spent one to two days with each man. The study team also interviewed civic leaders, faith leaders, policy makers, community organizers, and others who have unique expertise, knowledge, and influence on the community. Interviewers and the study team led discussions, asked questions, and collaborated to ensure the discussions traced back to the experiences of the men in the study. The study team engaged with the men to understand the experiences of men and those who are working to support them.

On the Surface

• Understanding: explanations and causalities

• Meaning: life story

• Detail: why do these things happen?

• Motivation: why do these things matter?

• Staging: what triggers these things?

• Bias: how do biases influence?

• Consequences: how do these things impact?

• Causes: what causes these things?

• Reinforcement: what reinforces these things?

• Amplify: how do these things influence?

• Synthesis: process of putting together findings to find patterns and highlight themes.

We will share the findings from ACCELERATE! nationally with the goal of helping our partners break down isolation and stigma, connect men to care, and support men to seek and maintain quality healthcare.

As the only company solely focused on HIV, we think differently, act differently, and connect differently in institutions in Baltimore and Jackson. These insights and ongoing lessons will be used to drive solutions focused on providing the needs of people living with HIV. We will share the findings from ACCELERATE! nationally with the goal of helping our partners break down isolation and stigma, connect men to care, and support men to seek and maintain quality healthcare.

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Resources

References