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# Towards STI POC testing to optimize syndromic management in LMICs

Symposium at the STI & HIV 2025 World Congress in Montreal

**Session co-chair:** Dr Remco Peters, World Health Organization

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, 29 July 2025, 10:00–11:30 (EST)

**Venue:** room 511 E

## Background

Strengthened case management is a key strategy to reduce the global burden of STIs and to meet the targets set in the [Global Health Sector Strategy for STIs](#). Syndromic management has been the mainstay for STI treatment for the past four decades in LMICs despite its limitations.

The most recent [WHO guidelines for the management of symptomatic STIs](#) recommend introduction of diagnostic tests to optimize the syndromic approach in settings where resources are available. There is a strong pipeline of STI POC tests, high-quality tests are becoming increasingly available, and the WHO has launched a call for applications for pre-qualification of these tests.

Despite the rapidly changing strategy, policy, technology and regulatory environment globally, various barriers exist to the implementation of STI diagnostic tests for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomonas in LMICs. Understanding the opportunities, challenges and needs in these settings is essential to advance this important agenda. This proposed symposium aims to identify and discuss key public health aspects and solutions that will accelerate the implementation of STI POC tests in LMICs.

## Session objectives

1. Increase awareness of the existing WHO guidance and the pre-qualification process for diagnostic tests for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and trichomonas.
2. Understand the landscape of STI diagnostic tests and specific user, provider and technology requirements for use in LMICs.
3. Identify opportunities, barriers and lessons learned from early adapting LMIC countries and important stakeholders in the eco system.
4. Discuss solution strategies to utilize opportunities and address common barriers that will accelerate the implementation of STI POC diagnostic tests in LMICs.

# Agenda

Time	Session	Speakers
10 min	Shifting paradigms: introduction of STI POC testing to optimize syndromic management in LMICs	Remco Peters, WHO, Switzerland
<b>Part 1: Matching technological developments with demand</b>		
5 min	User perspective: is STI POC testing acceptable to people with STI-associated symptoms?	Patricia Ongwen, Kenya
5 min	Advancing syphilis POCTs to distinguish active from latent or past infection	Jeffrey Klausner, USC, USA
5 min	Provider perspective: do healthcare workers see benefits of STI POC testing?	Mandisa Mdingi, South Africa
5 min	Technical specifications and requirements of a POC STI test: is perfect the enemy of good?	Bobbie van der Pol, USA
5 min	Is there a pipeline of POC STI tests that would be affordable in LMICs?	Tanya Applegate, Australia
15 min	Discussion 1: How can user and provider demand drive the STI POC development process?	All
<b>Part 2: Moving from policy to practice</b>		
5 min	What are the health benefits of POC STI testing? The example of Zimbabwe	Robyn Stuart, Australia
5 min	Is POC STI testing to optimize syndromic management cost-effective?	Emma Harding-Esch, UK
5 min	Models for implementation of POC STI testing: does one size fit all?	Yuka Manabe, USA
5 min	What would it take for countries to implement POC STI testing for STI-associated symptoms?	Francis Ndowa, Zimbabwe
20 min	Discussion 2: What is required to move from policy to practice? Any evidence gaps that must be closed?	All
5 min	Summary and closure	Griffins Manguro, Gates Foundation