

Cipla launches Live2Love mobile game to destigmatise HIV

Global pharmaceutical company, Cipla, has launched the Live2Love mobile game, created to raise awareness around HIV prevention and to break the stigma surrounding the virus.



Source: [Pexels](#)

The game serves as a reminder that people can live normal lives and find love regardless of their HIV status.

“The main objective behind the mobile game is to help eradicate the stigma associated with HIV as well as teach people about the importance of knowing their status, using pre- or post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP or PEP) medication. If they are living with HIV, it will encourage adherence to treatment for the best possible outcome,” says CEO of Cipla South Africa, Paul Miller.

The various levels of the game focus on protecting yourself, protecting your partner and protecting your family.

Mobile games educate

“With a considerable portion of the South African population in possession of a smartphone, using a mobile game to engage and educate people is a more effective way to reach people. Rather than trying to scare people about HIV or simply share more information in ways that have already been done and not always had the intended impact, the mobile game is a reminder that you can find love, start a family and not transmit HIV to your partner or child, and that you can live a long and healthy life.”

Staggering statistics

With more than 7.5 million South Africans living with HIV and 200,000 new infections every year, South Africa faces the largest HIV epidemic in the world. Equally concerning is that approximately 660,000 of all people living with HIV are young people between the ages of 15 to 24, and 310,000 are children younger than 14-years-old.

According to statistics recently presented by the Department of Basic Education, there are approximately 1,300 newly HIV infected adolescent girls and young women in South Africa every week.



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“These are incredibly sad statistics, especially considering how far modern medicine has come in preventing mother-to-child and partner-to-partner HIV transmission,” says Professor Linda Gail-Bekker, professor of medicine and chief operating officer of the Desmond Tutu HIV Foundation. “There are many ways to avoid the transmission of HIV that all form part of a powerful HIV prevention toolkit, which includes the PrEP pill.”

HIV prevention pill

In the ABCD (abstinence, be faithful, condoms and drugs) approach to HIV prevention, taking a pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), or HIV prevention pill, lowers the chances of transmission. This is especially vital information for discordant couples (cases where one partner is living with HIV and the other not), those who have multiple sexual partners, sex workers, and intravenous drug users.

“It’s crucial that PrEP be taken regularly and in the correct dosage, as directed by your doctor, if it is to be successful in preventing the transmission of HIV to HIV-negative people. Many people either forget or simply neglect to take their pills, not realising how dangerous this could be,” says Gail-Bekker.

New ART medication

The medical science community continues to explore innovative solutions to help with treatment adherence. Early but promising results of a new antiretroviral medication that can be injected once every six months were presented at the International AIDS Society conference that took place in July this year is one such example.

For those living with HIV, antiretroviral therapy is the first point of call in suppressing the virus, as well as curbing its spread. This allows individuals living with HIV to achieve and maintain what is referred to as an undetectable viral load (the amount of HIV in the blood), ensuring the virus cannot be transmitted to others. This message is critical to echo: undetectable equals untransmittable.

Equitable treatment access

Cipla’s history of ensuring equitable access to life-saving medication is well-established, having made its revolutionary 3-in-1 fixed-dose combination HIV treatment available at less than \$1 per day in 2001, in comparison to the then prevailing \$12,000 per patient per year.

“Building on this legacy of improved and equitable access to healthcare, our goalposts have now shifted to meeting the

realities of the digital age. Ensuring equitable access to information is just as important, which is the foundation on which the Live2Love campaign and mobile game are built,” says Miller.

“The mobile game is one part of a bigger conversation that needs to be happening more candidly in South Africa. As we reflect on the HIV epidemic that the country faces, it’s crucial that we address misconceptions and support those living with HIV in living long, fulfilling lives.”

In addition to the game, the campaign also includes videos of real people sharing their stories about living with HIV as a testament to living proudly and taking control of their lives, and also to help eradicate stigma.

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