

“Thirty Tough Questions” for Trial Staff

This tool can teach staff members about the scientific basis of the research and help them learn how to explain the research clearly. Staff members can cut the following questions into strips so that each one appears on a separate strip. They can put the individual questions in a hat and practice answering them at staff meetings or workshops. Over time, their answers will improve, and they will have the opportunity to see how their colleagues manage challenging questions.

- 1. Has the product you are studying been proven to be safe?**
- 2. What are some of the side effects?**
- 3. Why are you doing the study in this community, not in the United States or Europe?**
- 4. If a participant gets HIV while in the study, what treatment will she have access to and for how long?**
- 5. How does the community benefit from the research?**
- 6. Why is this study potentially exposing healthy women to HIV?**
- 7. Is it the first time that this product or drug is being tested?**
- 8. By giving women this product to use, are you discouraging them from using condoms?**
- 9. What if women become pregnant during the study?**
- 10. If you are encouraging people to use condoms, how are you going to find out if the product or drug is really effective?**
- 11. Why are you focusing only on women?**
- 12. Is the trial taking advantage of a vulnerable population that is in need of help and cannot say no?**
- 13. What kind of participants are you looking for?**
- 14. What is the purpose of this study?**

- 15. How well does this product work in preventing women from becoming infected with HIV?**
- 16. What HIV prevention methods are offered to women throughout the study?**
- 17. What does risk-reduction counseling mean?**
- 18. What are the benefits of participating in this study?**
- 19. What are the risks of participating in this study?**
- 20. Why can't everyone get the product or drug, since researchers think it might work?**
- 21. What does randomization mean?**
- 22. Won't participating in the trial ultimately put women at higher risk than if they had not participated?**
- 23. If proven to work, will the product or drug be available and affordable to the people in the settings where the trials are taking place?**
- 24. If you think the drug will be effective, is it ethical to give some women a drug with nothing in it to prevent HIV when you could be providing protection for all women in the study?**
- 25. Why do the participants have to use a modern form of contraception?**
- 26. Why are pregnant women excluded from the clinical trial?**
- 27. I have heard that the doctors take a lot of blood. How much blood will they take from participants and why?**
- 28. If the participants and researchers are blinded, how does anyone know who is getting the placebo or the treatment?**
- 29. How will the researchers protect participants who are at risk of partner abuse for participating in this trial?**
- 30. Will participants who seroconvert (get HIV) receive free ARVs for the rest of their lives?**

Source: Family Health International, 2009.