

Sarah Roberts, Ph.D.

Senior Research Epidemiologist
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RTI International

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12:30 – 1:00 PM Coffee/Pastry Mixer

1:00 – 1:50 PM, Foege N130

live stream: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/92391823761>

“Sociobehavioral research to support young women’s use of biomedical prevention products: from product development through real-world implementation”

ABSTRACT: Existing biomedical HIV prevention options are highly effective, but present substantial adherence challenges. Sociobehavioral research can be used to anticipate, understand, and address these challenges for current and future products at each stage of the translational research continuum, from basic science to population-level outcomes research. In this talk, Dr. Roberts will present findings from her research on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) uptake and adherence, conducted primarily among women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa. These studies have evaluated product preferences, acceptability, and lived experiences during clinical trials and implementation projects, including experiences with real-time adherence monitoring and provision of adherence feedback. She will also share examples of how other RTI researchers have incorporated sociobehavioral research with end users and healthcare providers into preclinical product development efforts to maximize adoption and willingness to use. She will discuss how these findings have informed the design of new products, implementation strategies, and behavioral interventions to improve and support PrEP use.

BIO: Sarah Roberts is Senior Research Epidemiologist in the Women's Global Health Imperative program at RTI International. Her research focuses on the behavioral, social, and structural factors that increase the risk of HIV for women and girls in sub-Saharan Africa and in the design of products and interventions to maximize uptake of and adherence to biomedical HIV prevention and treatment strategies. She earned an MPH in Global Health from Emory University in 2005 and a PhD in Epidemiology from the UW in 2016. At RTI, Dr. Roberts is the Principal Investigator of several NIH-funded studies that seek to increase PrEP uptake and adherence among AGYW by addressing barriers related to experience of gender-based violence and stigma, and for a CDC-funded study evaluating preferences for delivery of long-acting HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis among people in the United States. She provides technical advice on the behavioral assessments for several other related protocols using both quantitative and qualitative methods.