[FIG] TOGETHER TO END FEMALE GENITAL SCHISTOSOMIASIS

# Female Genital Schistosomiasis & Sexually Transmitted Infection Overlap

**The FGS Integration Group– October 2023**

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# STI symptoms could be a parasitic infection

- STI symptoms can be caused by a parasite that is transmitted in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of the Middle East.  90% of people who need schistosomiasis (bilharzia) treatment live in Africa.
- Schistosomiasis is transmitted through contact with contaminated fresh water (not sex!)
- Untreated schistosomiasis among women turns into female genital schistosomiasis (FGS)
- FGS is associated with increased risk for HIV and HPV, infertility, painful sexual intercourse and contact bleeding
- If you have a woman coming from an endemic area with STI symptoms you should consider female genital schisto (FGS) in your differential diagnosis
- Classic lesions can be found in the WHO FGS Atlas
- Lesions can be found in routine screening for cervical cancer and can confuse diagnosis but note lesions do not enhance
- Treatment is simple with a single dose of praziquantel 40 mg/kg

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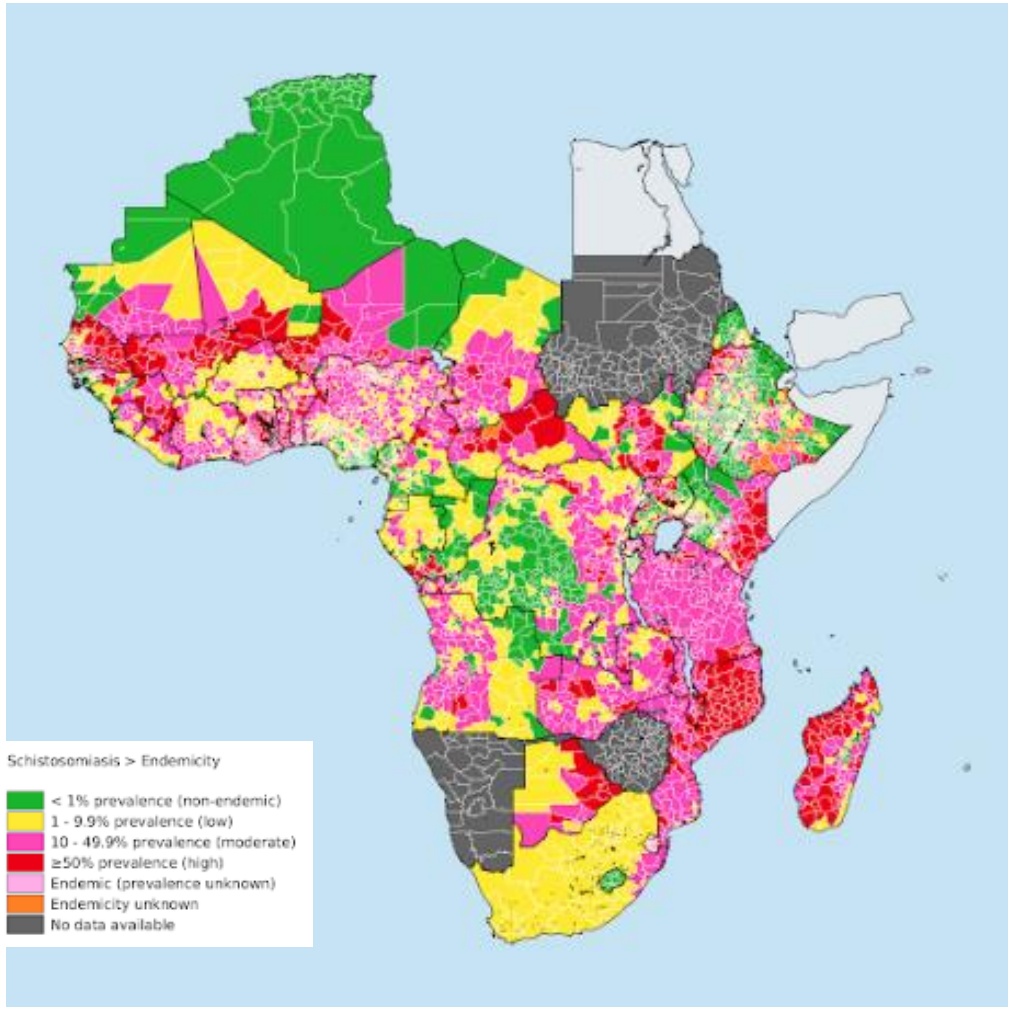
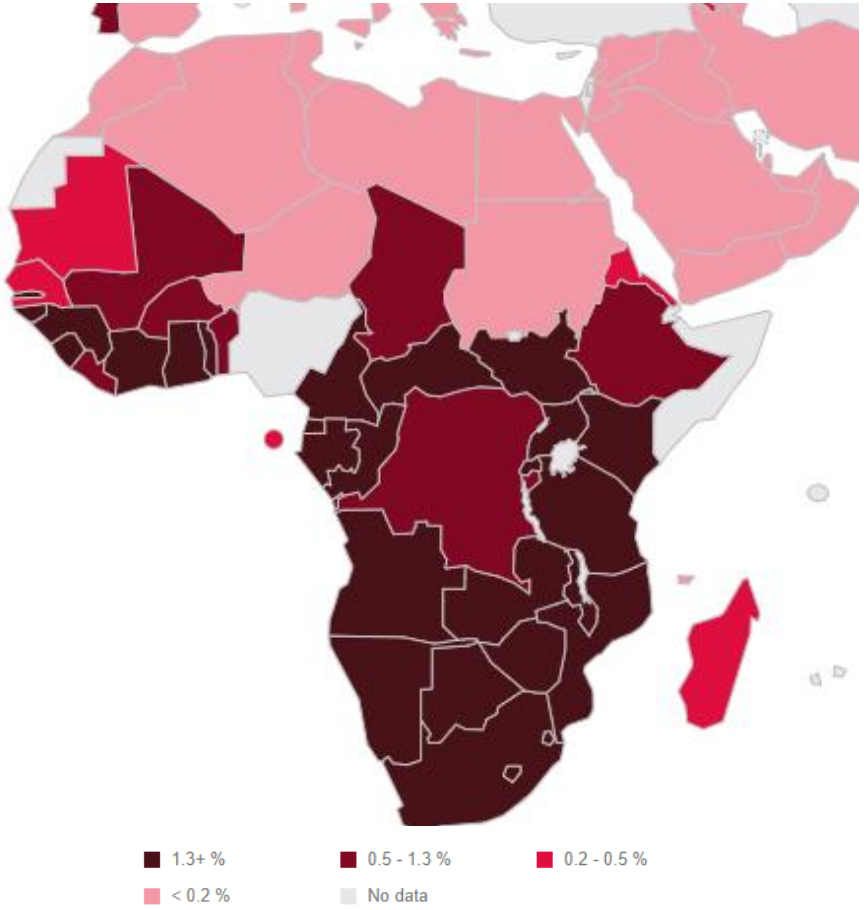
# Geographic overlaps

**Schistosomiasis endemicity**




**HIV prevalence**



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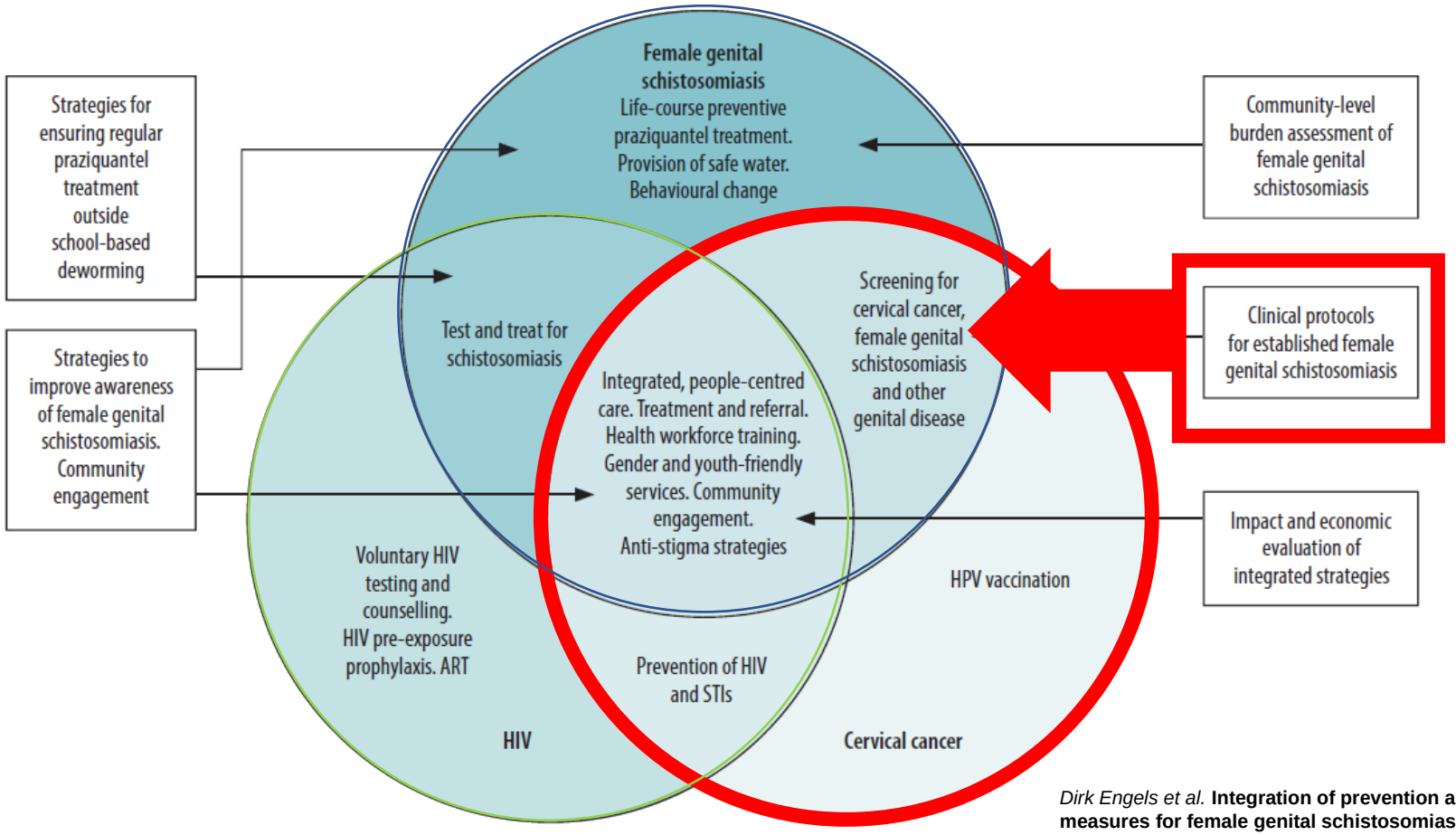
# Integration for interventions against FGS

**Integration promotes a Sexual reproductive health rights-based gendered programme approach to FGS prevention and control**

**There are several possibilities**

**Conceptual framework for the integrated programmatic implementation of female genital schistosomiasis, HIV and HPV/cervical cancer**




ART: antiretroviral therapy; HIV: human immunodeficiency virus; HPV: human papilloma virus; STIs: sexually transmitted infections.

*Dirk Engels et al.* **Integration of prevention and control measures for female genital schistosomiasis, HIV and cervical cancer.** *Bull World Health Organ* 2020;98:615–624|doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2471/BLT.20.252270

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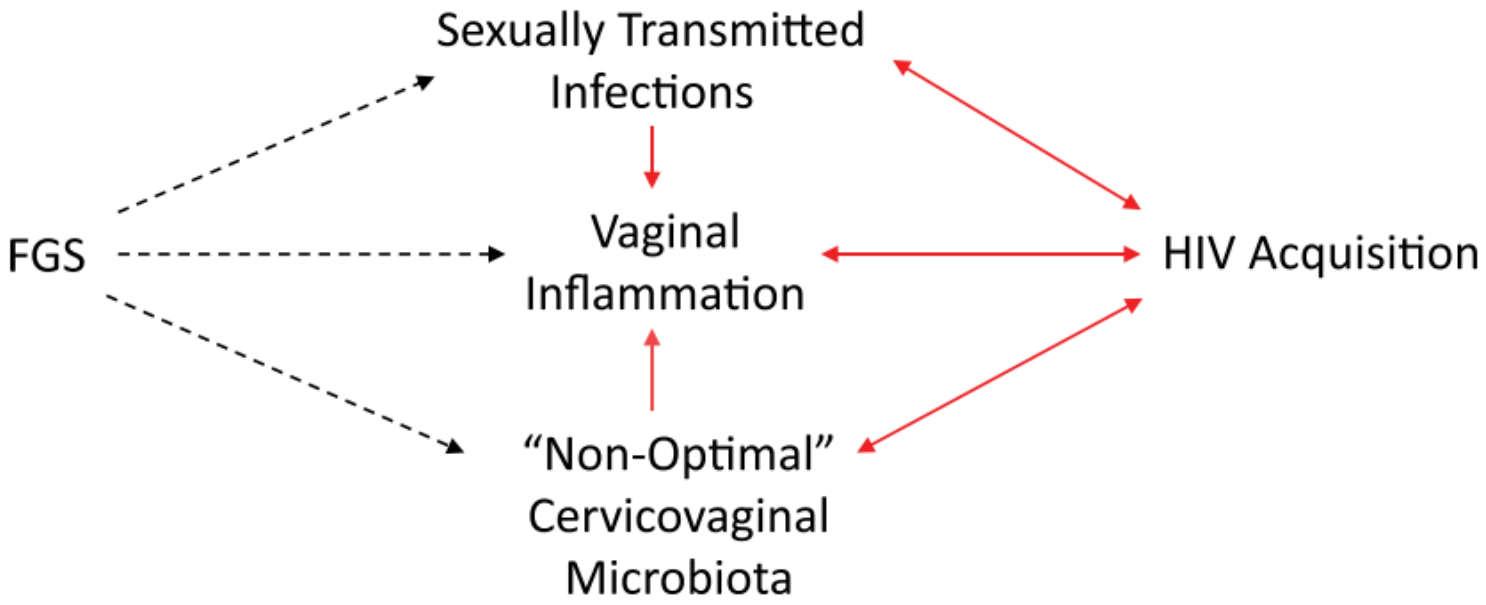
# Public Health Implication

**association FGS and HIV**

**Key**
Unbroken arrows – Well Described Relationships
Broken arrows – Research Needed




Conceptual pathway describing the potential contribution of FGS to vaginal inflammation and the association of FGS with sexually transmitted infection and "non-optimal" cervicovaginal microbiota (McKinnon et al., 2019).

Source: Sturt, A. S., Webb, E. L., Francis, S. C., Hayes, R. J., & Bustinduy, A. L. (2020). Beyond the barrier: Female Genital Schistosomiasis as a potential risk factor for HIV-1 acquisition. *Acta Tropica*, *209*(May), 105524. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actatropica.2020.105524

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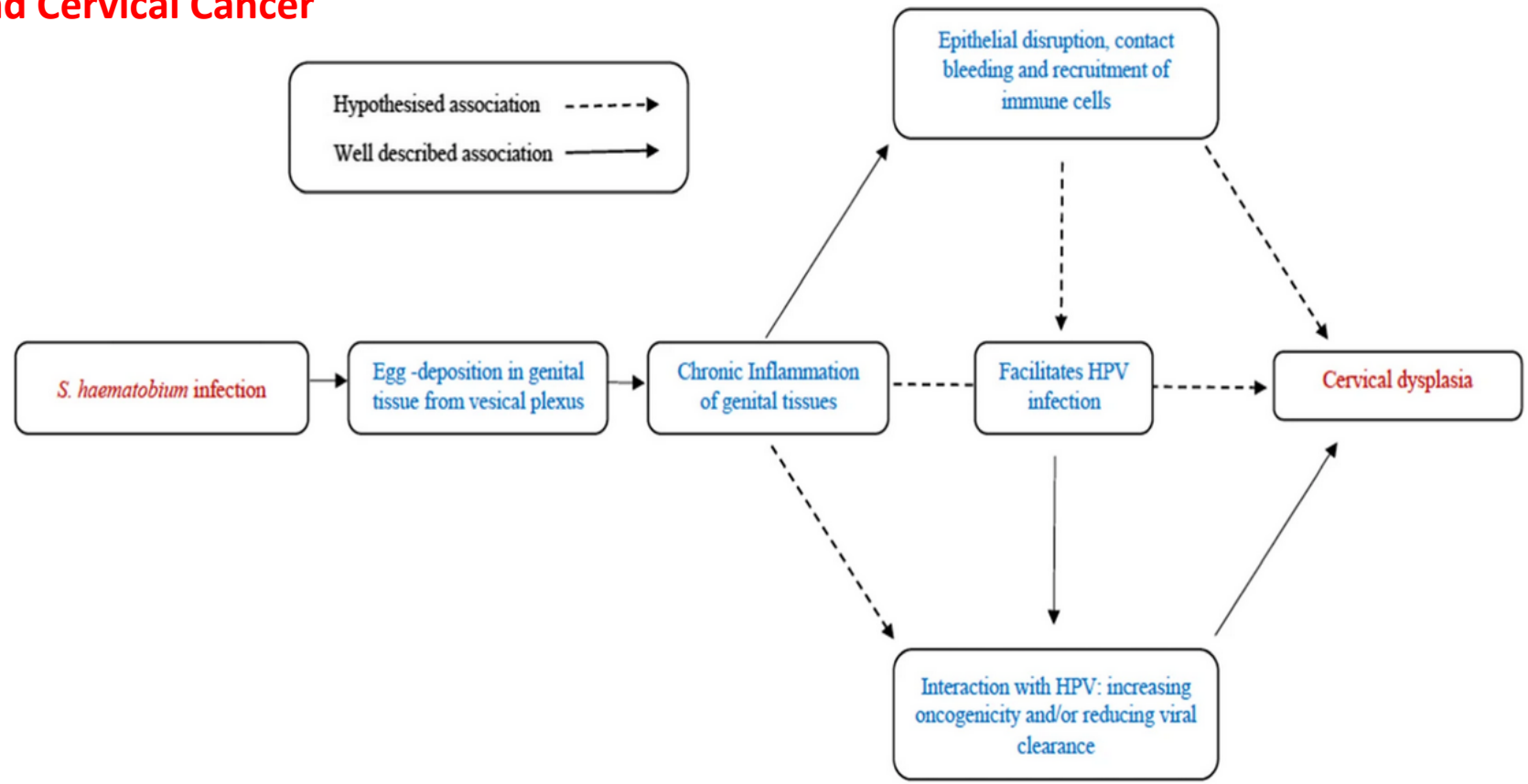
# Public Health Implications

## association FGS and Cervical Cancer




Conceptual pathway highlighting possible mechanisms linking female genital schistosomiasis and cervical dysplasia

Source: Rafferty, H., Sturt, A.S., Phiri, C.R. et al. Association between cervical dysplasia and female genital schistosomiasis diagnosed by genital PCR in Zambian women. BMC Infect Dis 21, 691 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12879-021-06380-5

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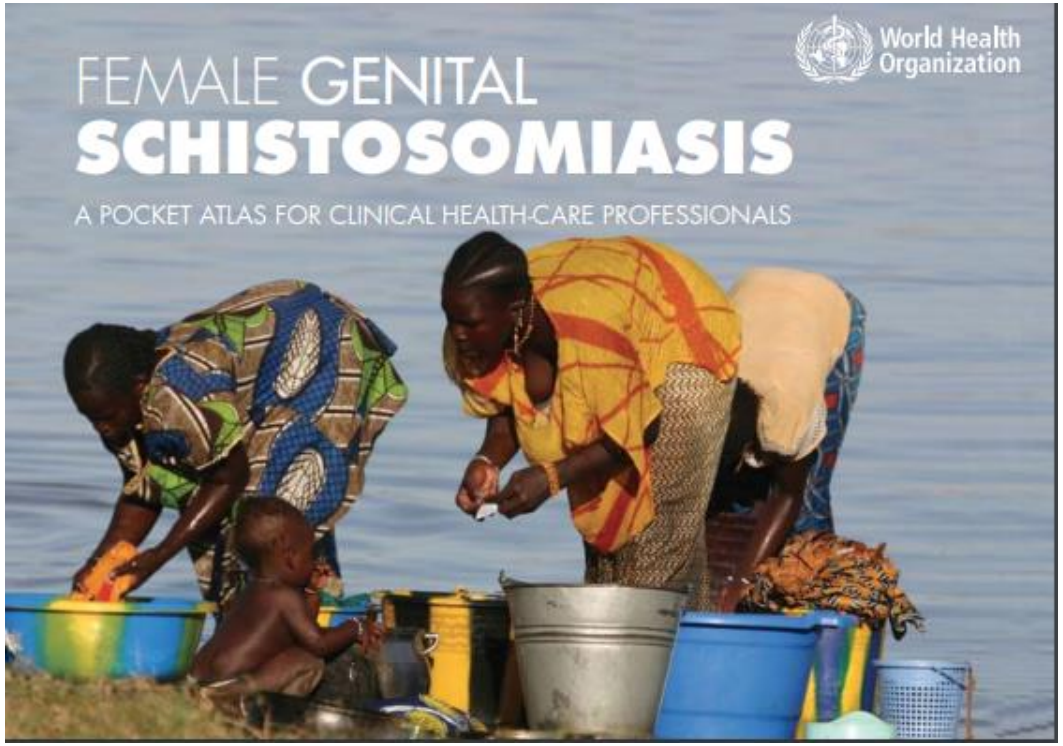
# WHO FGS Atlas

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# UNAIDS resource