

CASE STUDY:

**Media relations issues following the
closure of the Cellulose Sulphate Trial**

**Experience from Durban, South
Africa**

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BUILDING A HEALTHY NATION THROUGH RESEARCH





30th January 2007

- 🚫 study closure
- 🚫 Inform BREC, MCC, National and Provincial DoH

31st January 2007

- 🚫 Face-to-face meeting with BREC Chair

6th February 2007

- 🚫 Face-to-face meeting with Health Minister

13th February 2007

- 🚫 Sponsor and P.I present interim analysis to BREC

20th February 2007

- 🚫 Present to Parliamentary Health Portfolio Committee

21st February 2007

- 🚫 Face-to-Face meeting with Provincial DoH

Press Release

“...cellulose sulfate could lead to an increased risk of HIV infection in women who use the compound.”

4th February 2007

First negative press article

“guinea pigs contract HIV”

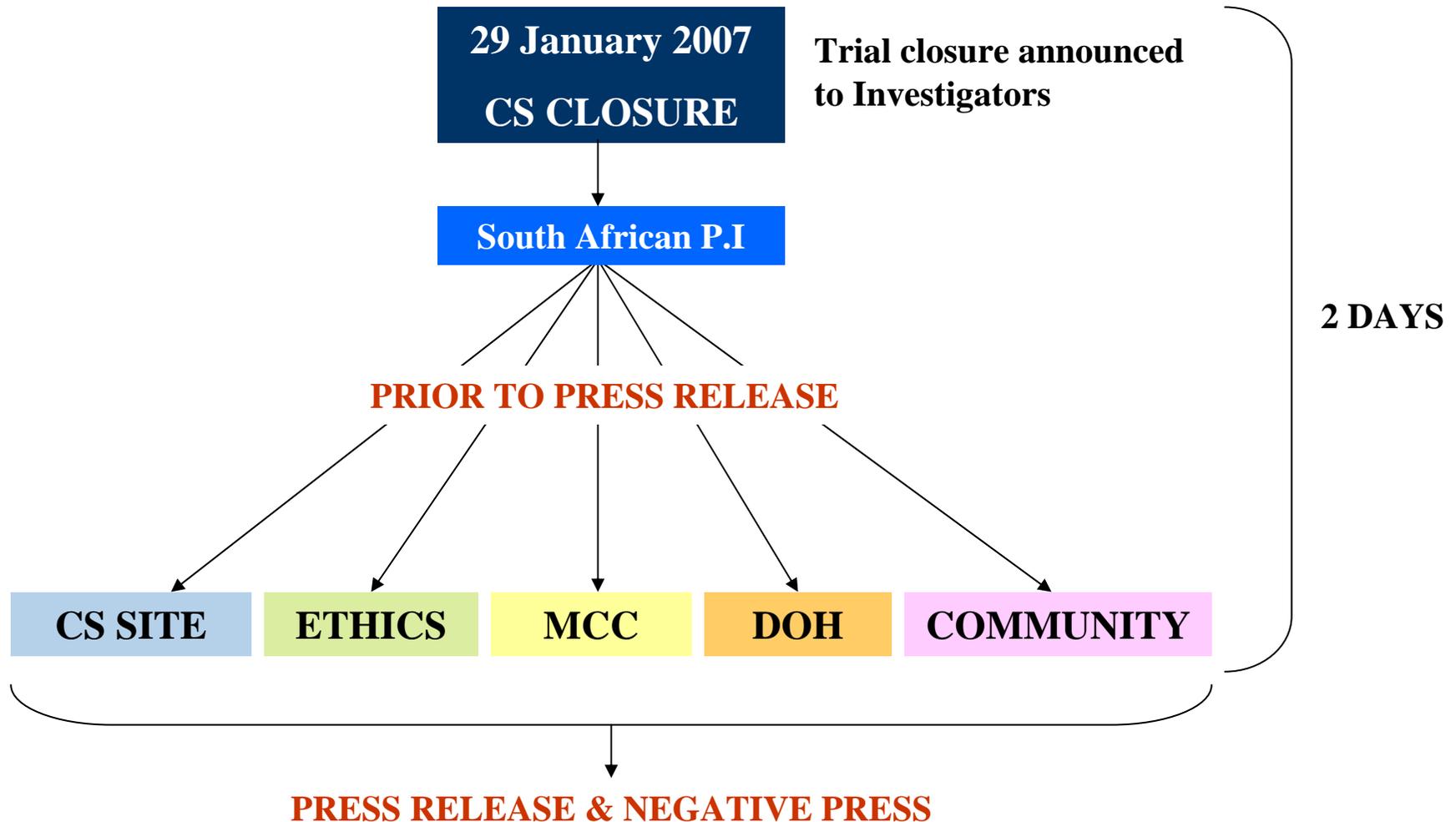
“hundreds of women...feared to have contracted the virus”

[participants] “...are bitter, feel used and misled...”

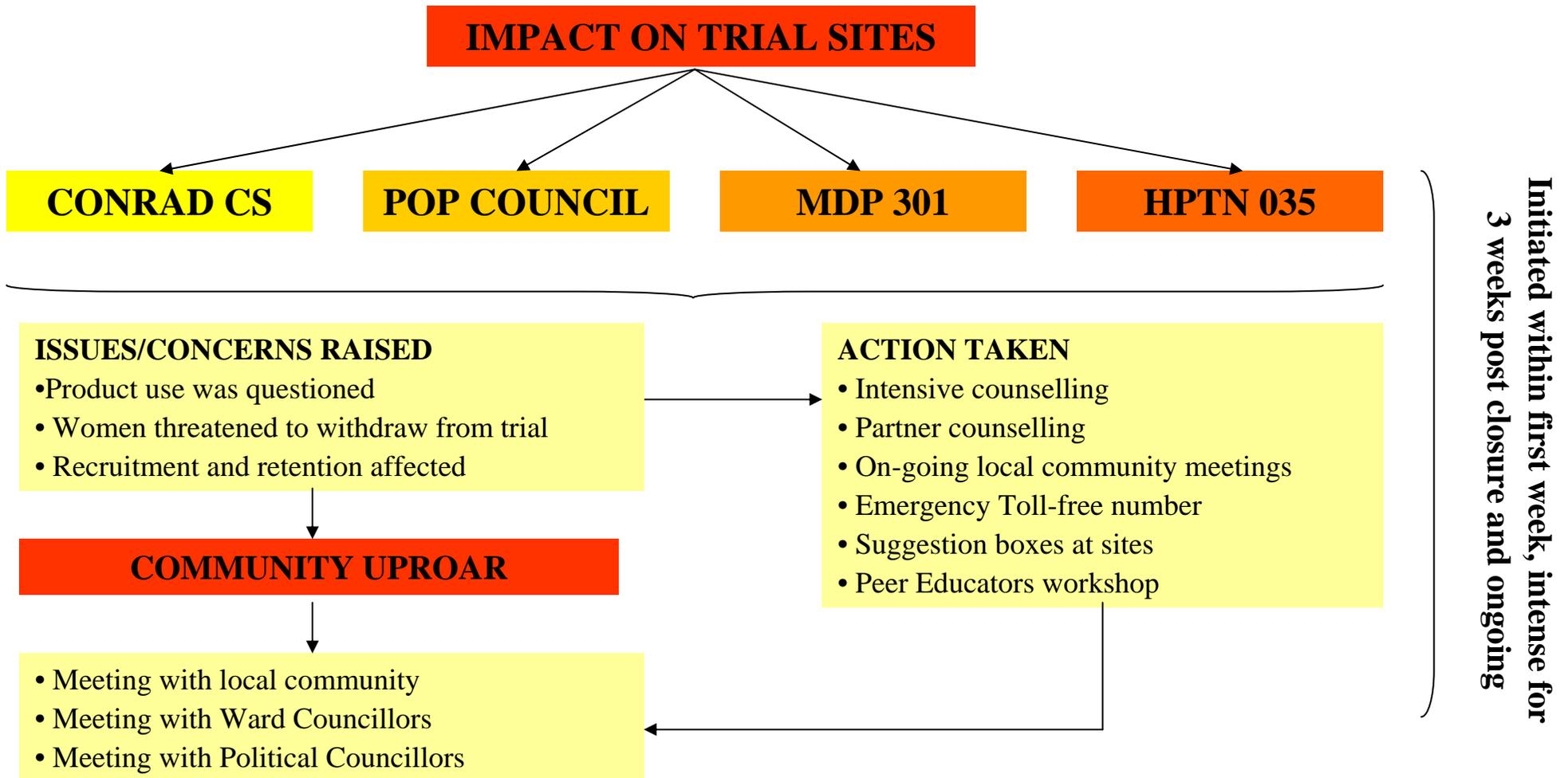
“We were told [by recruiters] to visit drinking spots...and make ourselves available when men approach us”

“...encouraged to sleep with as many people as possible.”

STRATEGY TO PROTECT OTHER TRIALS (CS EXPERIENCE)



STRATEGY TO PROTECT OTHER TRIALS (CS EXPERIENCE)



IMPACT ON CLINICAL TRIALS

CS closure impact on other microbicide and vaccine trials:

- 🚫 Researcher's honesty and transparency questioned**
- 🚫 Loss of community trust**
- 🚫 Distressed staff**
- 🚫 Local and national Department of Health questioned ethics of microbicide trials**



- 🚫 Involve site investigators and community in drafting press releases and communication strategies-prepare scenarios in advance**
- 🚫 Inform outcome to Ethics, MCC, local and national DOH prior to press release**
- 🚫 Engage press prior to press release- if possible press conferences concurrent in participating countries- sponsors, DOH,investigator reps.**
- 🚫 Underscores the need for effective community and stakeholder partnership**