HACK HEALTH PROJECT: NEW STRATEGIES TO EXPAND KNOWLEDGE ON COMBINATION PREVENTION AMONG BRAZILIAN YOUNGSTERS

Calixto, Diego Agostinho; Sousa, Carina Bernardes.

1 Department of Surveillance, Prevention and Control of STIs, HIV / AIDS and Viral Hepatitis, Ministry of Health of Brazil (MoH Brazil), Brasília, Brazil.

BACKGROUND:
According to Think with Google – Google’s research and trends portal -, 87% of Brazilian young adults, aged between 18 and 24, say that the smartphone is their most used device to access the internet and get information. During the 11 Brazilian Congress on HIV/AIDS and the 4 Congress on Viral Hepatitis, held in 2017, the Brazilian Ministry of Health (MoH) launched the Hack Health Project with the aim of developing innovative tools and devices capable of expanding Combination Prevention knowledge among the young and socially engage them through technology. In Brazil, young people, 15 to 24 years of age, account for ¼ of all new HIV infections, according to the 2017 Epidemiological Report.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:
Hackathon is a coding marathon, resulting from the combination of two words — hack and marathon. The hackathons have become a dynamic, open innovation, increasingly being used by institutions and applied in various areas of knowledge such as health (hack health). The project was presented as a side event in the congress and lasted for a total of 24 hours. The presentation was conducted by a team of specialists in Information Technology, who were also in charge of mentoring the young participants, and was supported by the MoH’s technical team, who was in charge of building the conceptual foundations related to Combination Prevention.

RESULTS:
The Project has enabled the development of innovative health devices and tools focusing on Combination Prevention. It has also functioned as a strategy to approach technology, communication, and health using, as one of its features, the creativity generated by the marathon’s competitive atmosphere, which was utilized as a way to encourage reflection and questioning among the young people and the groups. The project focused on exciting and engaging the youngsters in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) while simultaneously expanding their knowledge on combination prevention.

CONCLUSIONS:
The use of smartphones and ICT has been increasing in Brazil, mainly among young people. Utilizing strategies capable of stimulating creativity and generating innovation in health are fundamental to reach young people and expand their knowledge about combination prevention.