NEW HIV Cure Research Training

The Women’s HIV Research Collaborative (WHRC) has created a new training focused on the meaningful involvement of cisgender and transgender women in HIV cure-related research. Find it on the HANC website under the Training Resources page!
This month, the ACTG is highlighting two important studies:

The Impact of ART on the Efficacy of Vaginally Delivered Hormonal Contraception

**ACTG Changes Guidelines**

Effective family planning, which often involves the use of hormonal contraception, is an important component of care for women living with HIV. Unfortunately, some hormones have drug interactions with some antiretrovirals that may jeopardize hormone effectiveness or tolerability. Non-orally administered hormones may reduce the risk of these drug-drug interactions. The A5316 team sought to determine whether estrogen and progestin administered by a vaginal ring would be affected by oral ART containing either efavirenz or atazanavir/ritonavir.

Overall, 84 women participated in A5316 across 21 ACTG and IMPAACT sites in Asia, South America, sub-Saharan Africa, and the United States. The women were either not yet on ART or were receiving ART containing efavirenz- or atazanavir/ritonavir, and agreed to use a vaginal ring containing ethinyl estradiol and etonogestrel continuously over 3 weeks. The results showed that hormone concentrations were significantly changed by both types of ART. Efavirenz-based ART decreased both ethinyl estradiol and etonogestrel hormones, raising concerns for lack of efficacy and the risk of unintended pregnancies. While the atazanavir/ritonavir-based ART increased the progestin exposure (providing reassurance that the contraceptive effectiveness would be maintained), it decreased the estrogen exposure, which may increase the risk of mid-cycle bleeding.

While the findings are directionally similar to what we’ve seen with ART and oral hormones to date, the vaginal ring ART-hormone interaction often resulted in even larger changes in hormone exposure. A5316 further identified the influence of participant pharmacogenetics on the extent of the drug interaction. The study finding that efavirenz-based ART may jeopardize the effectiveness of hormonal contraception delivered by a vaginal ring has already been included in both the Adult and Adolescent as well as the Perinatal DHHS HIV treatment guidelines, highlighting the influence of this study.

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**Network Presentations at 2019 USCA**

The Legacy Project's Women's HIV Research Collaborative (WHRC) will be hosting a cross-network session at the United States Conference on AIDS, Sept. 5-8 in Washington, D.C. The session, *All About Us: Women and Biomedical HIV Prevention*, is based on a training program developed by the WHRC. The session will be held 9-10 a.m., September 8, and will feature updates on the MTN's vaginal and rectal microbicides research program as well as speakers from the HVTN and the HPTN.
The importance of understanding the pharmacology of vaginally administered drugs has particular relevance as vaginal rings are being developed for multipurpose prevention of both HIV and pregnancy. (Lancet HIV. 2019; 6:e601-12; Scarsi KK, et al.)

A Landmark ACTG Study Evaluating Second-Line ART Failure in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: “A Major Step Forward”

Prolonging the success of ART regimens in light of earlier starts and therapy over a lifetime requires innovative monitoring and treatment strategies. The Management Using the Latest Technologies in Resource-Limited Settings to Optimize Combination Therapy After Viral Failure (MULTI-OCTAVE) A5288 study was an open-label phase IV strategy study conducted in 19 sites in 10 lower- and middle-income countries (in Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean) for patients failing second-line ART. This study used newer antiretroviral therapies (ART) and contemporary management approaches, including population-based sequencing to select appropriate antiretrovirals, to evaluate virologic outcomes and emergence of resistance.

All patients enrolled into A5288 were failing second-line ART. The majority of these were on lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r)-based ART. Real-time standard genotyping at enrollment was performed and participants were placed into one of four cohorts with third-line ART tailored to the viral resistance results. The largest cohort (Cohort A) had the least amount of resistance and stayed on LPV/r-based therapy. Of the 545 participants enrolled from January 2013 to September 2015, 287 (53%) were assigned to Cohort A, 154 (28%) to B, 70 (13%) to C, and 34 (6%) to D, with increasing levels of resistance in each cohort. Overall, 64% (95% CI 60, 68%) of participants achieved viral loads ≤ 200 copies/mL at week 48 with proportions of virologic suppression for Cohorts A, B, C and D varying from 44%, 88%, 90%, and 74% respectively.

This important trial showed that most individuals had no resistance to the most commonly used second-line protease inhibitor (lopinavir) and little resistance to nucleoside or nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors, suggesting that poor adherence is likely a major contributor to second-line ART failure. This finding points to the need to develop novel methods to both measure and boost adherence. Those with virologic resistance achieved excellent rates of virologic suppression on third-line ART, pointing to the need for targeted HIV resistance testing when indicated.

A5288 is an unprecedented cohort of second-line ART failure in lower- and middle-income countries, incorporating rigorous metrics of adherence measurement (via hair levels) and resistance testing into its design. In an accompanying editorial, A5288 was hailed as “a major step forward in clinical research methods serving a rarely studied population.” (Lancet HIV. 2019 Jul 29. pii: S2352-3018(19)30146-8; Grinsztejn B, et al)
The **HPTN 091** study team hosted a series of community consultations in Houston, San Francisco and Rio de Janeiro with local stakeholders. The events were designed to solicit initial reactions to the study design and feedback on potential study implementation challenges. The consultations were facilitated by the two study protocol chairs, Drs. Tonia Poteat and Sari Reisner, along with Marcus Bryan, HPTN senior community program manager. Future consultations will take place in Philadelphia and Harlem, New York. HPTN 091, currently in development, is a vanguard feasibility and acceptability study examining the integration of HIV prevention, gender-affirmative medical care, and peer health navigations to prevent HIV acquisition and transmission among transgender women.

Pictured: HPTN 091 community consultation in Houston, TX.

Members of the IMPAACT Network recently participated in the first **PHOENIx study** community sensitization workshop for supervisors of Maharashtra’s state government TB control program. Fifty-four local government TB program officials and clinical site representatives met with an objective to ensure transparency and shared understanding of the study’s purpose and potential implications for India’s national TB control efforts. The PHOENIx Study is being conducted by the IMPAACT and the ACTG Networks.

In addition, results of three IMPAACT studies were recently published: the **PROMISE studies** (1077BF, 1077FF, and 1077HS) in *AIDS & Behavior*, IMPAACT P1104s in *AIDS Care*, and IMPAACT P1070 in *JAIDS*.

The 2019 MTN Regional Meeting will take place September 9-12, 2019, in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting will address next steps in the dapivirine ring licensure program; experience recruiting young women into ring studies; community and stakeholder perspectives on the **DELIVER study**; and other topics. The full meeting agenda can be viewed on MTN’s web site. Presentation slides from the meeting will be posted on the web site once the meeting has ended.
WEBINARS & TRAINING

Upcoming Webinars

National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day Conversation
*September 18, 2019 @ 9 AM PST*
National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day (NHAAAD) is observed each year on September 18. The focus of this day is to bring awareness to the challenging issues the aging population faces with regards to HIV prevention, testing, care and treatment. The Legacy Project invites you to join a lively and informative conversation covering a range of topics related to living and aging with HIV. [Register here.](#)

HIV Cure Research: An Overview of ACTG’s Cure-related Research and the Socio-behavioral Aspects of Cure-related Research (Part 3)
*October 31, 2019 @ 11 AM PST*
Please join the Behavioral Science Working Group (BSWG) for the third and final part of HANC’s Cure Research Webinar Series. Part One provided an overview of the state of HIV cure-related science. Part Two discussed community perspectives of HIV cure-related research. In Part Three, we will discuss the cure-related research being conducted by the AIDS Clinical Trials Group (ACTG) and the socio-behavioral aspects of cure-related research. Dr. Rajesh Gandhi will provide an overview of ACTG’s ongoing and upcoming cure-related research while Dr. Karine Dubé will address the social and behavioral issues in cure-related research. [Register here.](#)

Training

Women in HIV Cure Research Training
The Women in HIV Cure Research training focuses on meaningful involvement of cisgender and transgender women in HIV cure-related research. Training materials were developed by the Women's HIV Research Collaborative (WHRC), a working group of the Legacy Project.

This training is available on the [HANC website.](#)

HANC Webinar Archives

HANC Working Groups host webinars throughout the year and post recordings to the HANC website. [Click here](#) to view archives of past webinars.
HANC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Need to contact a HANC staff member? Click here to go to the About the HANC Staff page.

Behavioral & Social Sciences
Greg Davis, HANC Project Manager

The Behavioral Science Working Group (BSWG) will be hosting the third and final part of the HANC’s Cure Research Webinar Series, focused on socio-behavioral aspects of cure-related research. Details and registration can be found on the Webinars & Training page.

The Youth Prevention Research Working Group is planning a webinar on the adolescent brain and substance use. The webinar will feature Dr. Kevin Haggerty (U. of Washington) and Dr. Diana Fishbein (Penn State). The webinar has not been calendared yet, but once a date has been selected, a registration link will be sent to all of HANC’s collaborators.

Community Partners
Russell Campbell, HANC Deputy Director

The Community Partners (CP) and Community Research Advisors Group (CRAG) joint abstract, “Combatting Global TB/HIV Through Effective and Strategic Community Engagement Practices” was accepted as a workshop in the Community Space at the 50th Union World Conference on Lung Health in Hyderabad, India.

CP has finalized it agenda for its upcoming October 26-27 Face-to-Face Meeting. Some of the following topics will be presented during the meeting:
- Adolescent Medicine Trials Network (ATN) YEAH Collaboration
- Age & Identity Verification/Co-enrollment Tracking
- Current State of Research & Challenges & Impact on Community
- Martin Delaney Collaboratory Update
- Finalize Community Partners 2020 Work Plan
Duke and Rush University VQA teams held an ad-hoc conference call to further discuss the transition of the VQA contract. Duke will take over the VQA contract on September 20, 2019.

The CPQA Cross-Network Clinical Pharmacology Forum (CNCPLForum) held a conference call to discuss updates on proficiency testing and new technical guidance documents. The October CNCPL Forum call will feature a presentation on computer software validation processes. The December CNCPL Forum call will hold a presentation on standard wording for collection, processing, storage, and shipment of PK samples.

The Lab Technologists Committee (LTC) held a conference call to discuss LT assignments for upcoming protocols, operating procedures for fine needle aspiration of lymph nodes, standards for temperature monitoring devices, and LDMS Lab Metric Reports use by Performance Evaluation Committees. The LTC SOP Sub-Working Group held five conference calls to continue revising the Lab Processing Chart Standard Wording Documents.

The Laboratory Focus Group (LFG) held a joint conference call with the DAIDS Clinical Laboratory Oversight Team (DCLOT) and the Patient Safety Monitoring in International Laboratories group (pSMILE) to discuss harmonizing lab site naming standards. The groups also discussed new DAIDS guidelines and SOPs, including the Good Clinical Laboratory Practice (GCLP) Standards.

An updated CTU and CRS list is now available on the HANC website. Data in the CTU and CRS list is populated from the NIAID Clinical Research Management System (CRMS). The list is updated on a bimonthly basis and includes both network and non-network (ie. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), Adolescent Medicine Trials Network (ATN)) sites.
The Women’s HIV Research Collaborative has developed a new training on cisgender and transgender women and HIV cure-related research. In only 40 slides, this PowerPoint training gives a comprehensive overview of HIV cure-related research as it relates specifically to cis and trans women. It is intended for community members as well as researchers, and it includes recommendations for researchers and research staff. Slides and accompanying speaker notes are available for download in the Training section of the HANC public website.

The latest issue of BTG News, our quarterly publication on HIV prevention research conducted by the HPTN, HVTN, and MTN, is now available on the Be the Generation website. All recent issues of BTG News now appear at the bottom of the homepage.

Louis Shackelford has completed his Air Force Reserve training and will return to HANC/The Legacy Project on September 9th.

9/5-9/8: Brian Minalga and Russell Campbell will be representing HANC/Legacy at the US Conference on AIDS in Washington DC.

9/18: The Legacy Project recognizes National HIV/AIDS & Aging Awareness Day and will be hosting a conversation covering a range of topics related to living and aging with HIV. Register here.


Financial Disclosure
Greg Davis, HANC Project Manager

The HANC-facilitated annual solicitation is set to occur on September 20, 2019.
WORKING GROUP MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

In an effort to highlight the work of HANC and members involved in HANC working groups, we would like to introduce you to a few of our members from Community Partners and the Legacy Project Working Group:

Calvin Omondi Mbeba
Meet Calvin Omondi Mbeba, a member of Community Partners.

Location and role: Kisumu, Kenya. Community Educator at the Kisumu Clinical Research Site.

What he likes most about community education/engagement: I enjoy interacting with the different populations, continuously learning from them, and appreciate the diversity in thoughts and opinions otherwise thought as the norm or considered universal.

Michele Andrasik
Meet Michele Andrasik, a member of the Legacy Project Working Group.

Location and role: Seattle, WA. Director of Social & Behavioral Sciences and Community Engagement for HVTN and Senior Staff Scientist in the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Division at Fred Hutch.

What she likes most about community education/engagement: Connecting with community members to share information and learning about all of the innovative strategies communities have been implemented to address issues.

A fun fact about Michele: I love the water – especially the ocean – swimming, boating, scuba diving are all favorites.
RESOURCES

Newssletters

Be the Generation Newsletter
The Be the Generation (BTG) project builds scientific literacy and community capacity to engage with biomedical HIV prevention research. BTG News is its quarterly newsletter publication on biomedical HIV prevention research, geared for community audiences who are interested in the HIV prevention research field. Click here to view current and past newsletters. Email btg@hanc.info to subscribe.

Behavioral Science Interest Group Newsletter
Interested in behavioral science? Join the Behavioral Science Interest Group (BSIG) and subscribe to the BSIG Newsletter. Email Greg Davis at gpdavis@fredhutch.org for more details.

Network Publications
Several of the HIV/AIDS clinical trials networks and collaborators publish their own newsletters, covering a range of topics from network-wide news to community level events. Links to various network publications are on the Newsletters page of the HANC website. Click here for more information.

OCSO MOB Newsletter
Looking for the latest on site monitoring and regulatory compliance? Check out the Monitoring Operations Branch (MOB) Newsletter, produced by the DAIDS Office of Clinical Site Oversight (OCSO). Click here to find newsletter archives.

Laboratory

CNICS Research Network
The CFAR Network of Integrated Clinical Systems (CNICS) provides peer-reviewed-open access to a rapidly evolving clinical research platform that prospectively collects patient data, including validated outcomes, longitudinal resistance data, and detailed PROs with readily available biological specimens. Click here for more information.

EQAPOL
The goal of the External Quality Assurance Program Oversight Laboratory (EQAPOL) is to establish a panel of fully characterized viruses from acute/early and chronic HIV infections. Viral Diversity samples are available to NIAID-approved laboratories, and products created for the EQAPOL Viral Diversity Program are available to order. Click here for more information.

Specimen Repository
The specimen repository is a collaboration between the ACTG, IMPAACT, and HVTN clinical trial networks to make available to investigators the large body of specimens collected for HIV research. Click here to visit the site and request specimens.

NIH Corner

C3PNO Virtual Data Repository
The C3PNO Virtual Data Repository facilitates the sharing of HIV, substance use, clinical data, behavioral, and biospecimens collected by the NIDA longitudinal HIV cohorts with outside researchers. Click here to learn more or email c3pno.info@fstrf.org to request data or specimens.

ClinRegs
ClinRegs is an online database of country-specific clinical research regulatory information designed to assist in planning and implementing international clinical research. Click here to explore ClinRegs.

NICHD Data and Specimen Hub (DASH)
NICHD DASH is a centralized resource for researchers to access data and biospecimens from NICHD-funded research studies for secondary analyses. Click here to explore DASH.