

Optimising ART September 2018

This is a monthly update shared with all members involved in projects aimed at optimising ART, and is meant to provide a short update of major achievements, challenges, and plans for the future. Please submit any inputs to Celicia Serenata before the 1st Wednesday of every month.

Achievements from August 2018

ADVANCE, Wits RHI

- The interim analysis data set was submitted to the statistician for review and analyses of the data for the first 400 participants with primary end-point Week 48 RNA results.
- Wits RHI conducted an assessment of the current data management system (Nukleus) being utilised for ADVANCE. This exercise was done to explore alternative data management systems due to a series of ongoing limitations which have been identified in Nukleus. A more robust data management system would mean increased efficiency, improved workflow and more useful matrices available as the study progresses.
- The samples for the folate sub-study have been assayed and the data analysis is complete. The data was presented at a meeting in London at the beginning of September 2018, in preparation for the "Forum on the Risks of preconception ARV Exposure" which will be held in November 2018.

PK Study of Associations between Darunavir Plasma Concentrations and Virological Suppression, Lipids and Glucose, UCT and Wits RHI

- The study received ethics approval at the end of August 2018, and the assessment is imminent.

DaRifi, UCT

- Cohort 1 was successfully completed.
- The DSMB approved the continuation of the study with Cohort 2.



Upcoming Events

- 08 Sep – Unitaid semi-annual report due
- 24-25 Sep – PAC meeting, Geneva
- 26 Sep – TSC, Geneva
- 28 Sep – Final Year 4 Workplan

Nanoformulations, University of Liverpool

- The DRV nanoformulated feasibility study with Juniper Pharma Ltd is still ongoing. This is using the DRV/r 8:1 and 4:1 formulations prepared by UoL. Juniper will complete monthly stability analysis over the next 3 months. They currently have data from T0 and T1.
- Juniper Pharma has developed a working analytical methods for DRV and RTV in a combination product.

Country Introduction Activities, ICAP

Kenya:

- Product introduction
 - ICAP participated in the launch of the 2018 national ART guidelines on August 22nd. The new guidelines can be accessed [here](#).
 - ICAP provided technical assistance in the development of training resources for HCWs and IEC materials for PLHIV/caregivers on optimization of ARVs.
 - Finalized the addendum to the situational analysis report in line with the recent advisory on use of DTG in women of reproductive age.
- EDS
 - Supported ongoing data analysis for uploaded data warehouse data following the enhanced ARV monitoring indicators.

Côte d'Ivoire:

- Recruitment efforts for the ICAP Project OPTIMIZE Coordinator are ongoing.
- Participated in TLD Transition planning and coordination meetings.

Mozambique:

- Participated in planning with the MOH for the rollout of healthcare worker training and TLD introduction planning.

Global Activities:

- Published the Considerations for the Introduction of TLD in National Programs resource document [here](#)

Community Engagement, TAC

- 1319 people were trained in August 2018.
- The TAC National training of trainers took place from 26 – 31 August. This training was attended by the provincial trainers and district organisers. Updates from IAS and INTEREST 2018 were shared by the trainers who attended those conferences. Dr Simiso Sokhela from Wits RHI presented on DTG and neural tube defects. As a follow-up to the presentation, the team discussed possible messaging to be used with regards to TLD in all training and community engagements. The team also started brainstorming around ideas and content for

the proposed treatment literacy training manual. A timeline will be shared once it has been developed and agreed upon.

Community Engagement, HIV i-Base

- Training was conducted with TAC from 27–31 August 2018. This included planning for the training/facilitators manual.

Plans for September 2018

ADVANCE, Wits RHI

- Plan and conduct pre-validation processes of the new data management system.
- Completion of sample collection for the viral load monitoring sub-study.

DaRiFi (PK study of adjusted doses of darunavir/ritonavir with Rifampicin in HIV-infected volunteers), UCT

- Start with pre-screening activities for Cohort 2, with screening for Cohort 2 to commence during the week of 25 September 2018.

PK Study of Associations between Darunavir Plasma Concentrations and Virological Suppression, Lipids and Glucose, UCT and Wits RHI

- Complete validation of the DRV PK assay.
- Commence with analysis of the participant samples.

Nanoformulations, University of Liverpool

- Complete planning for the manufacturing campaign for spray dried DRV/r 8:1 on completion of the stability study.
- Submit an abstract for CROI 2019 on SDN formulations – analysis of the *in vivo* data is ongoing to feed into the abstract.

Country Introduction Activities, ICAP

Kenya:

- Product introduction
 - Participate in dissemination of the ART guidelines through the ECHO platform, training of trainers, etc.
 - Finalize the addendum to the situational analysis report in line with the recent advisory on the use of DTG in women of reproductive age.
- EDS
 - Scale up use of the EDS system to an additional 2 facilities.
 - Publish the enhanced ARV monitoring dashboard on the public view of the NASCOP national data warehouse site.

Côte d'Ivoire:

- Finalize recruitment of the ICAP OPTIMIZE coordinator.
- Work with MOH, USAID and other stakeholders on updating the ART transition plan.

Mozambique:

- Participate in the MOH TWG to revise the national ART guidelines to incorporate DTG for TB/HIV co-infected patients.
- Finalize adaptation of training modules on TLD for healthcare workers.

Global:

- Finalize the training modules on pregnancy and toxicity monitoring incorporating feedback from the WHO TDR pilot training on pharmacovigilance.
- Publish the comprehensive training package on the ICAP/OPTIMIZE site and through ICAP social media.

Community Engagement, TAC

- Provincial training of trainers is scheduled for Limpopo and Western Cape.

Community Engagement, HIV i-Base

- Planning of materials and sessions for the SAHCS conference which will take place in October 2018.
- Together with TAC, develop the posters and patient advocacy information leaflets on TLD introduction.

Other Notable Updates

Wits RHI and CHAI continues to support the National Department of Health (NDOH) and South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to ensure that the ARV tender to be awarded in late 2018 (for implementation 1 April 2019) includes TLD. To this end Wits RHI will assist the NDOH with updating the ARV guidelines. CHAI and Wits RHI is also assisting in reviewing the algorithm for TLD as it relates to women of childbearing potential and contraceptive advice. The ARV guidelines will be an opportunity to strengthen the implementation of IPT as well as contraceptive services.

Using the resources developed through the USAID and Unitaid grants (e.g. the ICAP and SAHCS training materials, and the TAC/HIV i-Base advocacy materials), Wits RHI will provide a package of resources to the NDOH to assist with the TLD introduction.

Finally, the manuscript on the WRHI052 low-dose darunavir study will be submitted in September to the journal AIDS.

Staffing Changes

- We are sad to say goodbye to Sarah Kellogg of ICAP, who left the organisation on 7 September. Mollie Braaten of ICAP, who has worked on OPTIMIZE before, will take over from Sarah. Welcome Mollie, and a sad farewell to Sarah, but best of luck in your new position.
- Wits RHI is very sad to lose Elle (Elisha) Maharaj at the end of September. Elle has been a stalwart of the OPTIMIZE team in Wits RHI since December 2016, and has been a critical team member assisting with project management, engagement with stakeholders, and critically with data management. Her loss will be felt not just in Wits RHI, but across the consortia managed by Wits RHI.

Outputs

Articles; manuscripts submitted for review; abstracts submitted; presentations given. (Also provide electronic version of such products for the Dropbox – see

[https://www.dropbox.com/home/OPTIMIZE Technical Steering Committee/Calendar+Events](https://www.dropbox.com/home/OPTIMIZE%20TechnicalSteeringCommittee/Calendar+Events))

Also, to assist with all communication, branding and marketing opportunities, please find relevant guidance and documents in the Dropbox at:

[https://www.dropbox.com/home/OPTIMIZE Technical Steering Committee/Communications+Branding+Marketing](https://www.dropbox.com/home/OPTIMIZE%20TechnicalSteeringCommittee/Communications+Branding+Marketing)

Papers published

- 6 August 2018: Pharmacokinetics of Efavirenz 400mg Once Daily Coadministered with Isoniazid and Rifampicin in Human Immunodeficiency Virus-Infected Individuals. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, ciy491, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciy491>

Resources

- HIV i-Base resources on Modern ART in Africa, and one specifically on South Africa. <http://i-base.info/modern-art-for-africa/>
- ICAP's ARV Transition Readiness Assessment for Country Program Managers. https://optimize.icap.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Readiness-Assessment_Finalv2.pdf
- ICAPS's Implementation Considerations document <https://optimize.icap.columbia.edu/resource/considerations-for-the-introduction-of-tld-in-national-programs-guidance-on-developing-clinical-and-programmatic-recommendations/>

Media Coverage

- 25 July 2018, AIDSMap. Dolutegravir dual therapy works well for first-time HIV treatment. <http://www.aidsmap.com/page/3313084/>
- 31 July 2018, AIDSMap. Dolutegravir brings faster viral suppression in late pregnancy. <http://www.aidsmap.com/Dolutegravir-brings-faster-viral-suppression-in-late-pregnancy/page/3316217/>
- 31 July 2018. NPR. Price of HIV test falls, raising hopes in global AIDS fight. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/07/31/633004496/price-of-hiv-test-falls-raising-hopes-in-global-aids-fight>

- 1 August 2018. AIDSMap. Unintended pregnancies and desire for children: reproductive health needs of women living with HIV. <http://www.aidsmap.com/Unintended-pregnancies-and-desire-for-children-reproductive-health-needs-of-women-living-with-HIV/page/3316234/>
- ICAP's OPTIMIZE project can help national #HIV programs navigate complex decisions around introducing the fixed-dose #TLD combo tablet – media links below:
<https://www.facebook.com/icapcolumbia/posts/10156586458814557>
https://twitter.com/ICAP_ColumbiaU/status/1037741073420963840
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6443505558132649984>

Useful Websites

- USAID page on ART optimisation: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/hiv-and-aids/technical-areas/antiretroviral-therapy-optimization>
- Unitaid page on ART optimisation: <https://www.unitaid.eu/project/safer-robust-less-expensive-first-line-antiretroviral-therapy-advance-trial/> (for the grant with Wits RHI, see associated grants below that)
- ICAP website for its OPTIMIZE activities: <https://optimize.icap.columbia.edu/>
- HIV i-Base website with resources for health workers and treatment advocates: <http://i-base.info/>

Future Conferences/Trainings

- 24-27 October 2018: 4th Southern African HIV Clinicians Society Conference, Gallagher Convention Centre, Midrand. www.sahivsoc2018.co.za
- 4-7 March 2019: CROI 2019, Seattle. <http://www.croiconference.org/>
- 21-24 July 2019: IAS Conference, Mexico City. <http://www.ias2019.org/>

Acknowledgements

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Unitaid finds new and better ways to prevent, test and treat HIV, tuberculosis and malaria quickly and more affordably. It takes game-changing ideas and turns those into practical solutions that can help accelerate the end of the three diseases. Established in 2006 by Brazil, Chile, France, Norway and the United Kingdom, Unitaid plays an important part in the global effort to defeat HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. For more information, please visit: www.unitaid.eu.

