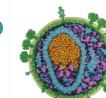


PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES IN A CURE-DIRECTED LONG-TERM ANALYTIC TREATMENT INTERRUPTION (ATI)

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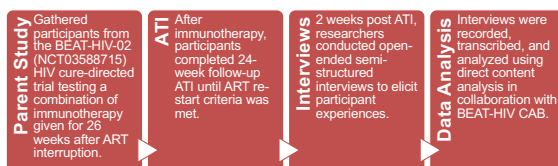
Background

- Most HIV cure-directed clinical trials require an analytical treatment interruption (ATI) to test the efficacy of interventions aimed at keeping HIV suppressed in the absence of antiretroviral treatment (ART).
- Little is known about how people with HIV (PWH) articulate or feel about having experienced extended ATIs.

Objective

- Identify participant-centered outcomes for participation in a cure-directed clinical trial.

Methods



Sample

- 13 PWH completed sequential interviews.
- Mean ATI was 38 weeks in duration.

	N=13	N (%)
Gender		
Female		2 (15)
Male		10 (77)
Transgender Female		1 (8)
Race		
Black		11 (85)
White		2 (15)
Age		
30-40		1 (8)
41-50		3 (23)
51-60		9 (69)

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Results

Qualitative Theme	Description	Quote
Positive Experiences with ATI	Participants viewed the ATI as positive because they appreciated a respite from daily medication. Some reported increased self-confidence when their counts remained low during the ATI, before viral rebound.	<p>"It's hard to explain how good it feels not to take one pill... Every day I went without taking it, just makes it feel so good... I am optimistic"</p> <p>"This clinical study has helped give me self-confidence, encouragement. Before I got involved in this, I hadn't worked in 14 years due to being ill, but they, I'm going to say, it helped give me back my life."</p>
Concerns & Disappointment with ATI	When viral counts rose, some expressed feelings of fear, frustration, anger and despair. Three expressed disappointment that they were not cured of their HIV. Rising viral loads led some to feel a sense of failure.	<p>"My viral load jumped up high [...]. So, it had me a little scared, because I had never seen my numbers in that range since I've been diagnosed."</p> <p>"So, I was hoping that there was a rare chance that these antibodies ...were really long lasting and that I would still be undetectable with just the antibodies."</p>
Relationship with Research Team	All participants reported a positive and trusting relationship with the clinical trial team. Reciprocal respectful relationships between participants and study staff were noted as helping to mitigate participants' safety concerns.	<p>"So, I felt like I was in safe hands and that always makes a person feel valued. That makes them feel like, I'm not just a guinea pig or I'm not just a number and grand number of participants. I wasn't just a participant I was a person."</p>



Discussion and Future Venues

Our socio-behavioral study identifies key points for intervention and participant support during HIV cure-directed studies including an extended ATI. Managing expectations, focusing on participants' contributions, and providing support to reduce feelings of having failed the research team and/or the HIV community following viral rebound should be part of study design. Our study illustrates that trust in health care and research is important to participate in research. Continued efforts to understand how PWH experience ATIs will improve future designs of HIV cure-directed clinical trials.