



Community Feedback on Acceptability of Long-Acting Antiretroviral Treatment

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Background

- ▶ The Information provided in this presentation is direct feedback received from Adolescents and Youth , *aged 16 -26 years*, who receive HIV Care & Treatment from our site, Baylor-Uganda in Kampala, Uganda.
- ▶ The responses of the Adolescents and Youth are put together from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) where the “Acceptability of Long-acting Antiretroviral Treatment” were discussed.

Question

- What is your opinion on the use of Long-acting methods for HIV treatment and care in terms of:
 - long acting injectables
 - long acting implants

With this, further questions were triggered:

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How does the implant look like (and so many others)?

Where is the injection injected?

How often are the injections administered?

Are these methods already available in Uganda?

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Some of the Advantages disclosed:

Convenience

- Frequency of injection is more convenient than taking tablets; an injection is administered once a month once in two months, compared to the swallowing of a tablet every single day.

Reduction of Stigma

- Getting injection is better with the reduction of stigma since one will just come to the clinic and get injection without the burden of having to walk around with tablets while living in fear of being found with the tablets.

Advantages disclosed:

Reducing Treatment Fatigue

- This method will also help in reducing treatment fatigue. Many Adolescents and Youth started taking antiretroviral drugs at a really young age so by this age, they are exhausted with having to take the pills therefore an injection would be an alternative.

Optimization of Adherence

- Long-acting methods are good at maintaining adherence since the treatment is administered at the hospital with in a short period of time therefore the chances of one missing treatment are less compared to the swallowing of a tablet everyday which one could easily forget.

Challenges disclosed:

- ❑ The Implant-method is too much **associated with contraception**, so it was not well received among the Adolescents and Youth.
- ❑ Issues with addressing side effects since **the long-acting methods might be hard to remove from the body** in case of adverse effects.
- ❑ Whereas it is a convenient method, it might not be the best option for people whose **actual problem is clinical visits**.
- ❑ It might also be hard for the ones going to school, since **sometimes it is not as easy to get permission to leave school to come for treatment**.

Recommendations

- ❑ The time frame in which this treatment is given should be within either two months or more to reduce the costs of movement while coming to the clinic for treatment.
- ❑ Masses need vast sensitization about the use of long-acting implants since it has a very close relationship with contraception.

Conclusion

The Adolescents and Youth are very excited about this mode of treatment especially the long-acting injectable. They can not wait for it to be available alternative.