Clinical trials design and methodology

PO - (7139) - CONDITIONAL ECONOMIC INCENTIVES AND MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING TO IMPROVE ADOLESCENTS’ RETENTION AND ADHERENCE TO ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY IN NIGERIA: ARA TRIAL

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Background: Adolescent HIV patients have worse treatment outcomes compared to other age groups given their vulnerability to risk-taking behaviour. Limited evidence exists on the effectiveness of service delivery interventions to support adolescents’ retention in care and adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART). The ARA trial tackles this challenge by evaluating the impact of conditional economic incentives coupled with motivational interviewing on adolescents’ retention in care and adherence to ART in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Methods: The study will be a cluster randomized, controlled trial conducted in twelve HIV treatment hospitals in Anambra State, Nigeria. Six hospitals each will be randomized to either intervention or control arm. A structured adherence support scheme termed the “Incentive Scheme” will be applied to the intervention hospitals while the control hospitals will receive routine HIV care. Additionally, patients in the intervention arm will receive motivational interviewing at baseline and following initiation of ART; they will receive a gift voucher of Nigerian Naira (NGN) 2000 when viral load (VL) is <20 copies/mL at 12 weeks, gift voucher of NGN 1000 if the VL remains suppressed for the next 3 months, and the next 6 months, and finally gift voucher of NGN 2000 if the VL remains < 20 copies/mL at 1 year. All gift vouchers will be conditional not only on VL results but attending for motivational interviewing. The primary outcome for the trial will be the difference between groups in the proportion with HIV viral load suppression (≤20 copies/mL) by 12 months and then 24 months after withdrawal of incentive scheme.

Result: The protocol for ARA trial and planned activities is given. Application for approval for the trial is on-going.

Conclusions: The proposed trial will provide evidence on the feasibility of applying the incentive scheme to improve retention and adherence to ART of adolescents living with HIV.