Characteristics of Women Enrolled into a Randomized Clinical Trial of Dapivirine Vaginal Ring for HIV-1 Prevention

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Outline

• Background and rationale

• Protocol overview: Design and objectives

• Baseline Characteristics of ASPIRE participants

• Questions
Background & Rationale

• Developing HIV-1 prevention options women can use remains a global priority

• Clinical trials among young women using daily or coitally-dependent products have found low adherence

• Coitally-independent, antiretroviral-containing vaginal microbicide rings which release medication over a month or longer may:
  – reduce adherence challenges and
  – may help maintain effective vaginal microbicide concentrations over a specified period
Developing dapivirine ring for HIV prevention

- Dapivirine is a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor of HIV
  - has shown safety and acceptability in phase I and phase II trials (in oral, gel, and ring form) but its large-scale safety and its effectiveness for HIV protection are unknown
- Formulated into a flexible silicone ring, it could provide a reliable, long-lasting, woman-initiated method to protect against HIV acquisition
- MTN-020: designed as a pivotal clinical trial to provide strength of evidence to support licensure of dapivirine ring for HIV prevention, along with complementary studies:
  - IPM 027 (efficacy & safety), >25 completed phase I/II studies
  - ongoing/planned work in adolescents/post-menopausal women, drug-drug interactions
Study Design and Objectives
MTN-020 / ASPIRE

A Multi-Center, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Phase III Safety and Effectiveness Trial of a Vaginal Matrix Ring Containing Dapivirine for the Prevention of HIV-1 Infection in Women

(ClinicalTrials.gov number NCT01617096).

The study protocol can be found at http://www.mtnstopshiv.org/studies/3614.
MTN-020 Objectives

• Primary Objective
  – To determine the *effectiveness* and *safety* of dapivirine (25 mg) administered in a silicone elastomer vaginal matrix ring, when inserted once every 4 weeks, in preventing HIV-1 infection among healthy sexually active HIV-1 uninfected women.

• Secondary Objectives
  – To assess the *acceptability* of and *adherence* to the dapivirine vaginal ring, the frequency of *drug resistance*, and the *relationship between drug concentrations and HIV-1 seroconversion*. 
MTN-020 Design

- Randomized (1:1 active:placebo), double-blind, phase III trial

- Statistical design: 90% power to detect a 60% reduction in HIV-1 risk, ruling out a 25% reduction in risk, with a two-sided alpha of 0.05, including adequately powered analyses related to adherence

- Women use the ring for at least 1 year, with subjects enrolled early in the trial using >2 years.

- All participants receive a comprehensive HIV-1 prevention package, including risk-reduction, condoms, treatment of STIs, and partner testing and referral services
MTN-020
Population and Procedures

• Population
  – Sexually active HIV-1 uninfected women who are non-pregnant, contraceptive, and between 18-45 years of age

• Procedures
  – Monthly follow-up
    • HIV-1 testing, risk-reduction, contraceptive provision on-site, clinical and laboratory safety monitoring, product provision and counseling, and referral for pregnancy and HIV-1 care

• Data Collection
  – Paper based CRFs-Faxed using DataFax software (DF/Net Software ULC) and received at Statistical and Data Management Center located in Seattle, Washington, USA.
  – ACASI for some behavioural data collection

Data analyses conducted using SAS version 9.2 (SAS Institute, Cary, NC)
RESULTS
ASPIRE: 2,629/5516 women, 15 sites, 4 countries

Blantyre
Lilongwe
Malawi (272 women)

Cape Town
Durban (7 sites)
Johannesburg
South Africa (1,426 women)

Kampala
Uganda (253 women)

Harare/Chitungwiza (3 sites)
Zimbabwe (678 women)

54% from SA, 10% MA and UG, 26% ZIM
Figure 1. Study Schema

Recruit women at risk for HIV-1
N=5516 screened, 2887 not enrolled

Randomize eligible HIV-1 seronegative women
n=2629

Dapivirine ring
n=\sim 1314

Placebo ring
n=\sim 1314

Follow for primary endpoint of HIV-1 infection and co-primary endpoint of safety
Baseline Participant Characteristics

- Age range 18-45, median 26, 39% <25, 14% 35+

- 59% unmarried, particularly SA (92%) followed by UG (34%), ZIM (17%), MW (15%)

- 85% had partial or complete secondary schooling or higher - mainly SA (96%) and ZIM (88%)
Participant characteristics

In the 3 months prior to screening and enrolment

• Nearly 100% of participants reported having a primary sex partner
  – 17% reported additional partners in this period
• Median number of sex acts : 20 (IQR 7-36)
• 57% reported male or female condom use with last vaginal sex act
• Anal sex : reported by 2% of those enrolled (n=54)
Partners of Participants

• Of 2616 participants reporting a primary sex partner in the past 3 months
  – 1.3% (n=35) knew their primary partner was HIV-1 infected
  – 43% (n=1137) did not know their primary partner’s HIV-1 serostatus

• 75% reported that their primary partner was aware of their participation in a research study

• 64% reported that their primary partner knew that they would be using a vaginal ring
Table 1. STIs detected at Screening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STIs detected at the screening visit</th>
<th>Malawi</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Zimbabwe</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Trichomonas vaginalis</em></td>
<td>28 (10%)</td>
<td>88 (6%)</td>
<td>13 (5%)</td>
<td>51 (8%)</td>
<td>180 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Neisseria gonorrhoeae</em></td>
<td>13 (5%)</td>
<td>55 (4%)</td>
<td>15 (6%)</td>
<td>26 (4%)</td>
<td>109 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chlamydia trachomatis</em></td>
<td>6 (2%)</td>
<td>237 (17%)</td>
<td>25 (10%)</td>
<td>48 (7%)</td>
<td>316 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Syphilis</em></td>
<td>11 (4%)</td>
<td>7 (0.5%)</td>
<td>6 (2%)</td>
<td>15 (2%)</td>
<td>39 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons for ineligibility

Of 5516 women screened, 2887 (52%) did not enroll
  – Screen: enrol ratio of 2.1:1
  – 2454 completed screening but were not eligible
  – 378 did not complete screening
  – 55 women (1% of those screened) were eligible but declined enrollment.
Reasons for ineligibility

• Of 2454 ineligible women:
  – seropositivity for HIV-1 (35%, 854 women)
  – pregnancy or planning to become pregnant (8%, 203 women),
  – breastfeeding (1%, 31 women),
  – not meeting laboratory eligibility criteria (8%, 203 women),
  – not meeting other clinical eligibility criteria (12%, 295 women).
  – 58 (2%) ineligible based on a grade 2 or higher pelvic examination finding.
Reasons for ineligibility

- IoR discretion to not enroll was exercised for 753 women (31% of those screened and not enrolled),
  - whom in opinion of site investigator enrollment of the subject would make
    - study participation unsafe,
    - complicate interpretation of study outcome data, or
    - otherwise interfere with achieving the study objectives.
- Most often, this discretion was used to enroll women committed to the study objectives and its intensive, longitudinal follow-up schedule.
Discussion

• African HIV-1 seronegative women at risk of HIV-1 acquisition from general population were successfully enrolled

• Participants were sexually active, with an important minority reporting >1 partner during the prior 3 months, and curable STI prevalence was high

• ~40% of participants were less than 25 years of age at the time of enrollment, more than half were unmarried (59%), and over 40% reported recent sex unprotected by condoms

  – In the VOICE trial of HIV-1 seronegative heterosexual women, these baseline characteristics predicted higher HIV-1 incidence as well as lower product adherence
Male partner involvement

- Defining characteristic of microbicides – potential for clandestine use or without explicit acquiescence of partner
  - majority of women in ASPIRE report telling their male partners about their planned study participation/ring use
- Additional work during trial to explore:
  - disclosure of ring use,
  - male partners’ perceived attitudes and reactions, and
  - the influence of male partners on women’s adherence to ring use.
Risk Reduction

- Comprehensive package of HIV-1 risk reduction services
  - self-reported condom use for last vaginal sex act at baseline was high in our cohort (57%)
  - women may have over-reported condom use as a result of social desirability bias

- High HIV-1 prevalence at screening across sites - some as high as 40% - underscores urgency around identification of interventions for women to protect themselves from HIV-1 acquisition
Motivation For Joining Trial

- HIV Risk
- access to quality health services including HCT
- health education, transportation reimbursement, peer pressure and altruism

- Commitment to visit schedules - explored in advance of enrolment in context of life plans (e.g., potential future employment, education or marriage)

- Careful assessment of all women presenting for enrolment by site investigators executed across ASPIRE sites
  - attempt to recruit individuals committed for duration of trial
Screen out rates

• ~20% of women who screened out were due to clinical and laboratory related eligibility criteria
• If dapivirine-based PrEP is shown to be safe and efficacious in ongoing trials, its safety will subsequently need to be assessed in HIV-1 susceptible persons who are less optimally healthy than those selected for this trial, as well as pregnant and lactating women.
• Bridging studies are already being planned for lactating women to respond to these questions.
Conclusion

• Women in HIV prevention research face social and psychological risks, especially marginalized and vulnerable populations

• 2629 African heterosexual women at risk of HIV-1 transmission were successfully recruited

• Long-acting microbicide-based PrEP products, if well tolerated and effective, could simplify dosing regimens, thereby reducing user-dependent adherence challenges
Conclusion

• Given high risk of HIV-1 transmission among women, microbicides could be a cost-effective intervention.
  
  • If demonstrated to be safe and effective in ASPIRE and the IPM Ring Study, implementation could be targeted to at-risk women in an effort to curb the HIV epidemic.
  
  • Maximum PrEP benefits, at both individual and population levels, will likely be achieved by combining PrEP with other effective HIV-1 prevention interventions.
THE WORLD IS WATCHING
Acknowledgements

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Thank You

Participants and communities