Treatment outcomes for XDR TB and HIV co-infections

Study shows that ARVs are a good predictor of XDR TB survival among HIV co-infected patients.

The paper published in *Emerging Infectious Diseases* describes the treatment outcomes, adverse events, and risk factors for demise among patients in South Africa with extremely drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB), most of whom were co-infected with HIV.

The authors concluded that the risk factors for XDR TB-related death among HIV co-infected patients were reduced by half if the patient was taking early antiretrovirals (ARVs) and receiving aggressive TB treatment.

However, ARVs did not improve XDR-TB culture conversation (a negative TB test), demonstrating the urgent need for new generations of TB drugs.

In previously conducted research, high mortality rates have been reported for patients co-infected with XDR-TB and HIV, but treatment outcomes have not been reported.

Data from 114 adult XDR-TB patients from the King George V Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal Province were obtained retrospectively, and outcomes were obtained prospectively during 24 months of treatment. Most of the patients (57%) were female, significantly younger than male patients and were more likely to be co-infected with HIV.
Global Virus Network announces new board of directors

On 16 January 2013, the Global Virus Network (GVN) announced the addition of Professor Salim Abdool Karim, together with nine other members, to the GVN Board of Directors.

Commenting on the new appointments, Dr C Gallo, co-founder of the GVN and Chair of GVN’s Scientific Leadership Board, said: “The addition of these new Board members will add valuable resources to the GVN and will greatly enhance GVN’s global visibility.”

In response to the announcement, new board member, Salim Abdool Karim, said: “By increasing its reach in Africa, GVN is well-placed to make an impact with innovative solutions to a number of human viral diseases that threaten Africa and beyond.”

The new GVN board appointees will join founding board of directors members Tim Moynahan (previously served as founding Chair), Mathew Evins, Terry Lierman, Dr. Tony Cernera, along with Dr. Robert Gallo, Dr. Reinhard Kurth of Germany and Dr. William Hall of Ireland, who co-founded GVN.

GVN is a coalition of the world’s leading medical virology research centres working to prevent illness and death from viral diseases.

Comprising international medical virologists, the GVN’s mission is to combat emerging pandemic viral threats and current viral killers through international collaborative research, training the next generation of medical virologists, education and advocacy.

For further reading: http://globalvirusnetwork.org

Continued from front page:

The patients were treated with between three to nine TB medications. Almost three quarters of the study group were HIV-positive and six out of ten were receiving antiretroviral therapy.

After receiving treatment for 24 months, almost half of the 114 patients died.

Just over one fifth of patients were cured or successfully completed treatment, 19 defaulted, and 22 showed treatment failure.

The global epicentre of the XDR-TB and HIV syndemic is KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, where nearly 400 XDR-TB patients, 70 per cent co-infected with HIV, were admitted to a provincial TB referral hospital for initiation of therapy during 2003—2008.

Of all XDR-TB cases reported to the World Health Organization globally during 2002-2009, 73 per cent were from South Africa.

For further reading:
US health think tank visit

The new year at CAPRISA kicked off with a high profile visit by US congressional health advisors led by Dr Sharon Stash from the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) and Ms Alisha Kramer, Global Health Policy Center. The fact-finding tour was initiated by CSIS.

The main aim of the visit was to hold discussions on prevention and treatment services addressing South Africa’s dual HIV/AIDS and TB epidemic, and to understand how these programmes aligned with the five pillars of the AIDS-Free Generation blueprint unveiled by Hillary Clinton.

Discussions were also held on the important partnerships with US funding institutions and future collaborations. One of the areas discussed concerned the ongoing technical exchange between the USA and South Africa, which have contributed to strengthening South Africa’s programmes in combatting HIV/AIDS and TB.

2012 Christmas box

CAPRISA staff provided overwhelming support to school children in the Vulindlela by donating monies and gifts for the annual Christmas Gift Box Initiative.

In addition to raising close to R9000, which was used to purchase essential school and personal items, staff also provided age-appropriate gifts which were handed to about 70 youngsters.

A special thanks goes out to Tanuja Gengiah and Michele Upfold for coordinating the massive effort, as well as to the staff who supported the initiative with their generosity.

CAPRISA’s official Facebook page was launched in January 2013 to share developments on our programmes, as well as postings on HIV/TB issues, events and achievements with our stakeholders and the wider community.

“Like” us at http://www.facebook.com/#!/caprisaofficial

Back row, left to right: Mrs Annatjie Peters (CDC), Dr Kogie Naidoo, Dr Sharon Stash (CSIS), Ms Alisha Kramer (CSIS), Prof Salim Abdool Karim, Ms Anne Oswalt (Health Advisor to Senator Bob Corker), Ms Sally Canfield (Deputy Chief of Staff to Senator Marco Rubio), Ms Christy Gleason (Advisor to Senator Chris Coons), Dr Tom Warne (CDC).

Front row, right to left: Mr Tom Walsh (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), Ms Heidi Ross (Policy Analyst with Senator Eliot Engel), Mr Todd Summers (CSIS), Ms Gethwana Mahlase (Zimnandi Zonke), Prof Quarraisha Abdool Karim, Dr Nesri Padayatchi.

Commencing the tour

Briefing by the PCZCDC laboratory staff, where the waiting time for TB results has been reduced from 6 to 2 hours.
Scientific papers published in 2013


Scientific Reviews

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abstracts submitted for review</th>
<th>Manuscripts submitted for review</th>
<th>Ancillary studies submitted for review</th>
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# for month, ^ since committee initiation

Conference & Workshop Reminders

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<td>CROI</td>
<td>3-7 Mar 2013</td>
<td>1 Feb 2013</td>
<td><a href="http://retroconference.org">http://retroconference.org</a></td>
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<td>6th SA AIDS Conference</td>
<td>18-22 Jun 2013</td>
<td>19 Sep 2012 From 2 Sep 2012</td>
<td><a href="http://www.saaids.co.za">www.saaids.co.za</a></td>
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