

# HATiP

HIV & AIDS Treatment in Practice

Issue 63 | 17 February 2006



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# News from the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections

## News headlines

The Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) takes place each February in the United States, and has established a reputation as the leading scientific conference in the HIV field.

This year's CROI featured a rich selection of research reports relevant to resource-limited settings, including encouraging data from Zambia, South Africa, Uganda and international cohorts on the success and tolerability of ART, important new data on TB treatment, and contradictory findings on the risks and benefits of treatment interruptions.

This edition of HATIP contains links to [aidsmap.com](http://www.aidsmap.com) reporting from CROI; the next edition will include further reporting and summaries of research focusing on two areas: TB and HIV, and the risk of death in people who begin antiretroviral treatment in resource-limited settings

CROI: rapid response predicts success in HIV/HCV coinfecting patients

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/BD51C0C3-36BF-47E6-B116-37190B489F8E.asp>

Virological response to hepatitis C therapy after four weeks appears to predict who will have a successful response to a full course of treatment in HIV-positive people coinfecting with hepatitis C genotypes 1 or 3, according to findings from two studies presented last week at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver.

Bristol Myers Squibb announces voluntary licenses for atazanavir in India and South Africa

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/18333DF9-46B6-47E0-879A-42727AD4CED3.asp>

Bristol Myers Squibb announced today that it will grant voluntary licenses for manufacture of its new protease inhibitor atazanavir, sold in Europe and North America under the brand name Reyataz, to pharmaceutical companies in India and South Africa for sale in India and Africa.

CROI: Cotrimoxazole prophylaxis reduces adverse birth outcomes in Zambian women with HIV

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/5FC7F0F9-3158-4BDA-B677-875B82B3C1D9.asp>

Cotrimoxazole prophylaxis significantly improves birth outcomes in women with HIV according to an analysis of a mother-to-child HIV transmission (MTCT) study in Lusaka, Zambia. The serendipitous finding was observed after cotrimoxazole prophylaxis began to be offered routinely in Zambia to HIV-infected women with advanced disease.

CROI: Two studies show single-dose nevirapine prevents HIV transmission in consecutive pregnancies

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/077B2D16-12AA-4B3E-A944-E3B0D2B0265A.asp>

Women who have used single-dose nevirapine (*Viramune*) to prevent mother to child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV can use it with equal or greater success during a second delivery, according to studies presented at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver last week.

CROI: Male circumcision reduces risk of transmission of HIV and some STIs to female partners

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/D775D204-7155-4CDF-ACB5-8CAA1C6730FA.asp>

Male circumcision reduces the risk of HIV transmission to female sexual partners by approximately one-third according to a study presented to the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver on February 8<sup>th</sup>. The investigators also found that circumcision reduces the risk of men infecting their female partners with some sexually transmitted infections.

CROI: Risk of new illnesses declines sharply after first two months on treatment in resource-limited settings

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/032EA68E-0832-48C3-A7CF-62ECB8B66CE6.asp>

People on antiretroviral therapy (ART) in resource-limited settings experience HIV-associated illnesses (HAI) and tuberculosis (TB) at double the rate observed in high-income countries, according to a study reported at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver.

CROI: TB rates skyrocketing in Western Cape township – most infectious cases associated with HIV coinfection

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/CE720DF3-2054-4C37-988C-409FE2B6B33E.asp>

Infectious smear-positive TB (tuberculosis) is most commonly found in people with HIV coinfection, which is likely to be responsible for the skyrocketing rates of TB in South Africa according to a survey of TB and HIV prevalence in a peri-urban township south of Cape Town. There was also a high number of smear-negative TB cases, but it was more likely to be found among HIV-negative individuals.

CROI News Feature: Experts divided over the future of treatment interruptions

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/54ABE6CE-49F4-4FD6-8BDB-32708873EFCC.asp>

Experts at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, held this week in Denver, were divided over the future of structured treatment interruptions during a lively panel discussion that followed the presentation of the results of the SMART study, reported separately here along with five other structured treatment interruption studies. Whilst the CD4-guided treatment interruption arm of the Trivacan trial in west Africa was also terminated early due to excess illness in those who interrupted therapy, two other CD4-guided treatment interruption studies - Staccato and ACTG 5170 - appeared to have more positive outcomes, as did two fixed-length treatment interruption trials, Window and PART.

CROI: Greater declines in TB incidence observed with long-term antiretroviral therapy

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/9E0101FB-11D2-47C3-A384-4F31995715D2.asp>

The incidence of tuberculosis (TB) in people on antiretroviral therapy (ART) continued to decrease over the first three to five years

on treatment in a South African study reported this week at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver.

CROI: Capsaicin patch helps relieve neuropathy

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/C007D69E-07D3-41E4-8E59-C14664AF051.asp>

A patch containing 8% capsaicin can relieve the pain caused by peripheral neuropathy for up to three months, according to a controlled study presented on Tuesday at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver.

CROI: Tenofovir and kidney toxicity - low rates seen, but some groups may be more vulnerable

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/538244AD-0FCD-4FBA-8250-34F45FBF379F.asp>

The Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections gathered together five varied studies of kidney toxicity in patients taking tenofovir (*Viread*) to better establish the frequency of this adverse event.

CROI: Heart attack risk elevated by protease inhibitor treatment but not NNRTIs

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/DB1EE740-DA2F-4E0B-B372-85A7FC5DC3C9.asp>

The increased risk of heart attack seen in patients taking antiretroviral therapy is caused by protease inhibitors and not non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs), according to an analysis of the D:A:D study presented today at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Denver. The study showed that this was partially due to the changes in blood fat levels caused by protease inhibitors.

CROI: Side-effects, especially neuropathy and rash, common but rarely severe in two studies of African patients on antiretroviral therapy

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/48A79438-B95F-49B9-90FB-B8D4A246C5DC.asp>

Although drug side-effects due to antiretroviral therapy (ART) are relatively common in African patients, they are no more likely to be severe than in patients in industrialised countries, and appear chiefly related to the d4T (stavudine, *Zerit*) component of first-line treatment rather than to nevirapine (*Viramune*), according to two large studies presented on Wednesday at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver.

CROI: CD4-guided treatment interruptions unsafe, SMART study concludes

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/5CA70DAC-AFEA-4567-8FC7-4CD5C458F10A.asp>

Treatment interruptions guided by CD4 cell counts put HIV-positive patients at an increased risk of disease progression, AIDS and death, according to the results of a large international study presented today at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver.

CROI: Antiretroviral therapy reduces the high incidence of TB in South African children with HIV

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/9453A62B-64A0-4267-A45F-5AC7A8F72B87.asp>

Children with HIV in South Africa have an extremely high incidence of tuberculosis (TB), but antiretroviral therapy (ART)

substantially reduces TB (suspected cases) according to a study reported at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver. (The presentation can be viewed or listened to here).

CROI: Abacavir may be safer than nevirapine in Africans, DART sub-study suggests

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/AA3B19BA-A37B-499A-ACE0-93CD87F6F699.asp>

Abacavir (*Ziagen*) appears to cause fewer serious adverse drug reactions than nevirapine in African patients taking part in a substudy of the DART trial, investigators reported on Tuesday at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver.

CROI: HIV subtype D causes disease more rapidly than HIV-1 subtype A in Uganda

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/FE5EA2A1-67D7-4D6D-9C65-C445C5F13C08.asp>

Ugandans infected with HIV subtype D are more likely to experience rapid disease progression to AIDS or death than those infected with subtype A, according to a study reported at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver. This effect was independent of viral load for the first two years after infection.

CROI: Rapid scale-up of HIV treatment in Zambia

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/B67B5B29-EAFE-4563-A98E-539EA9086356.asp>

Zambia's Ministry of Health reported impressive results from its HIV treatment scale-up programme at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, held this week in Denver. CROI: Valaciclovir reduces HIV genital shedding in HIV-positive women

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/4797D024-25FE-44A8-B225-5172D98DF4D2.asp>

Treating herpes simplex virus-2 (HSV-2) with valaciclovir reduces genital shedding of HIV in women, according to the results of a proof-of-concept study presented to the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver on Monday. This is the first randomised controlled trial to demonstrate a causal relationship between HSV-2 and HIV replication.

CROI: 70% still on first regimen after three years in Khayelitsha, but lactic acidosis a major challenge

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/2AF3CBB2-4B24-407C-B905-6354C1E548B7.asp>

Lactic acidosis is occurring at an unusually high frequency in South African women receiving d4T-based therapy and is the main reason for toxicity-related treatment switches, a South African research group reported on Monday at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, taking place this week in Denver.

CROI: Successful PREP trial in monkeys sparks call for more research

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/A9933662-4C06-4968-9146-082EAF42DE33.asp>

A successful trial of 'combination pre-exposure prophylaxis' (PREP) in monkeys using tenofovir (*Viread*) and FTC (emtricitabine),

*Emtriva*) has resulted in community advocates calling for more studies to see how the concept might be applied to humans. CROI: Simplified treatment regimens show promise in HIV-infected children

<http://www.aidsmap.com/en/news/87CA1C05-1D3F-4556-B2C4-B1866F4647DF.asp>

Two studies presented this morning at the Thirteenth Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Denver have shown that simplified HIV drug regimens are safe and effective in HIV-infected children and adolescents.

## about HATiP

A regular electronic newsletter for health care workers and community-based organisations on HIV treatment in resource-limited settings.

The newsletter is edited by Theo Smart (Cape Town) and Keith Alcorn, NAM's Senior Editor (London).

For further information please visit the HATIP section of [aidsmap.com](http://aidsmap.com)