Getting it right first time

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GOALS OF THERAPY

• Durable suppression of HIV viral load to less than 50 copies/mL
• Restoration of immune function (as indicated by the CD4 cell count)
• Prevention of HIV transmission
• Prevention of drug resistance
• Improvement in quality of life
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How do we detect adherence?

• Direct methods
  – Therapeutic drug monitoring
    • Blood
    • Hair

• Indirect methods
  – Self-report
  – Interview
  – Pill counts
  – Pharmacy record
  – Computerized medication caps
  – Viral load monitoring.
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Pharmacy record

- Actual pharmacy refill dates are compared with expected dates of refill
- Electronically recording dispensing
- Cannot monitor pill-taking behaviour
- Pharmacy refill may also not be useful if refills are sent automatically
Viral load monitoring

- VL should be performed at 6 months, one year and annually thereafter.
- Undetectable vs. less than 1000.
- All VL above 1000 should be acted upon.
Patient-and family- /caregiver-related factors
- Disclosure of HIV status
- Sex of the patient
- Age of the patient
- Active drug and alcohol use by patient or caregiver
- Substance use
- Perceptions to the medication
- Presence of anxiety, depression
- The presence of HIV infection in another family member
- Family disruptions
- Psychosocial factors
- Education
- Cognitive impairment
- His/her own knowledge about ART, belief in ART

Medication-related factors
- Too many pills
- Side effect of the drugs
- Scheduling problem
- Access to medication
- Access to medical care
- Frequency of daily doses
- Length of the treatment
- Administration of the drug
- Child refusal/vomiting
- Self-discontinuations
- Need for daily administration
- Dietary restriction
- Drug interactions

Health care delivery systems related factors
- Limited availability and accessibility of ARVs
- Healthcare facilities for diagnosis and treatment of HIV
- Healthcare providers experienced in HIV treatment
- Patient-provider relationship, availability of counseling services
- Health education/information
- Provision of privacy

Social/environmental factors
- Living conditions
- Stigma and discriminations
- Multiple caregivers
- Financial problems
- Structural social support
- Income

Adherence to ART
What factors can we as health workers address?

• Counselling
  – Perceptions about medication
  – Perceptions about HIV

• Substance abuse and mental health

• Scheduling of medication
  – Once a day dosage if possible
  – Night shift workers
Way ahead

• Systematic monitoring of adherence
  – Pharmacy pick up
  – VL detectable with appropriate action and prompt change to second line