Evaluation report
IAS-ILF Symposium at INTEREST 2014

Expanding access to viral load monitoring in resource-limited settings

5 May 2014
Lusaka, Zambia
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Introduction

The International AIDS Society-Industry Liaison Forum (IAS-ILF) held a symposium at the 8th INTEREST Workshop 2014 in Lusaka, Zambia on 5 May 2014. The title of the symposium was “Expanding Access to Viral Load Monitoring In Resource-Limited Settings”. There were overview presentations, followed by a panel discussion on the challenges and solutions to viral load (VL) monitoring in resource-limited settings (RLS) (see agenda in Appendix A).

Attendance

Approximately 75 to 100 people participated in the symposium.

Feedback from participants

Surveys (see Appendix B) were distributed to the participants. Forty surveys were completed. The majority of respondents were based in Africa (85%), with 43% coming from Zambia, and the rest of the participants from Europe (10%) and the USA (3%). The majority of respondents (45%) were affiliated with hospital and clinics, while 40% were affiliated with academia (universities, research institutes, etc.) and 23% were affiliated with non-governmental organizations.

Participants were asked which conferences or meetings they usually attend. Two-thirds said that they usually attend the INTEREST Workshop, half said that they attend the International AIDS Conference and one-third said that they attend the IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention. Nine respondents (23%) said that they usually attend other meetings (not on the list) and most of them listed meetings/conferences that occur in their local areas/countries.
When asked about the main reasons for attending the symposium (respondents selected all options that applied), 65% said that they attended mainly to learn more on expanding access to VL monitoring in RLS; an equal portion (65%) said that VL monitoring in RLS has direct implications on their work. For 63% of the respondents, the main reason for attending the symposium was because they have a general interest in VL monitoring in RLS and 58% attended the meeting to discuss the challenges of VL monitoring in RLS. The majority of respondents (73%) gained new insights on expanding VL monitoring in RLS, while 35% of the respondents shared their ideas on expanding access to VL monitoring in RLS. While 78% said that they will use the information presented in their professional activities, 65% said that they will follow up on the new contacts that they made during the meeting.

Participants were asked to rate the various parts of the symposium (presentations and panel discussion) and 45% of respondents rated the parts as good and 33% as excellent, while 10% of respondents rated them as fair. When rating the organization of the symposium, 43% of respondents rated it as excellent, 41% as good and only 4% as fair. For future improvements, 48% of respondents suggested providing more information about the symposium in advance and 33% suggested allowing more time for the interactive discussion with the audience.
Overall, the symposium was positively received with respondents making positive comments, as well as taking the opportunity to make a few suggestions. Some of the comments and suggestion included:

- **The symposium was very useful.**

- **The conference is good and [an] opportunity to know more about new developments.**

- **The engagement and questions from the audience reflected the relevance of this topic in RLS. Great job.**

- **The use of VL testing is very important for treatment failure. A simple example: a 48 year old lady commenced on ARV (Atripla) 4 years ago [and] the first CD4 count was 26, [then] it went to 28, and for the past 2 years the CD4 count has been the same. Clinically the patient looks fine. Without VL testing in such a case, it is difficult to talk about failure but luckily enough VL testing was done and showed <40 copies.**

- **There is a need to increase support for research work in RLS. Community care should also be strengthened due to low staff levels; however, this will need support and adequate training.**

- **Next time VL is discussed, bring the perspective of someone who is in the ministry of health from any African country so that we can put a face to the research being presented.**
### Appendix A: Agenda

**EXPANDING ACCESS TO VIRAL LOAD MONITORING IN RESOURCE-LIMITED SETTINGS**

Symposium in conjunction with INTEREST  
Organized by the International AIDS Society-Industry Liaison Forum

Monday, 5 May 2014, 16:00 – 18:00  
InterContinental Hotel Lusaka, Lusaka, Zambia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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| 16:00 – 16:05 | **Welcome and introduction**  
Co-Chairs: Linda-Gail Bekker (Desmond Tutu HIV Centre, South Africa)  
Catherine Hankins (Amsterdam Inst. for Global Health and Dev., Netherlands) |
| 16:05 – 16:25 | **Overview presentation I**  
Clinical rationale for viral load monitoring in resource-limited settings  
François Venter (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa) |
| 16:25 – 16:45 | **Overview presentation II**  
Cost-effectiveness of viral load monitoring in resource-limited settings  
Linda-Gail Bekker (Desmond Tutu HIV Centre, South Africa) |
| 16:45 – 17:05 | **Overview presentation III**  
Laboratory challenges to viral load monitoring in resource-limited settings  
Sue Aitken (Ndlovu Research Consortium, South Africa)  
Slides by Trevor Peter (African Society for Laboratory Medicine, Botswana) |
| 17:05 – 17:15 | **Community perspective on viral load monitoring in resource-limited settings**  
Michael Gwaba (Community Initiative for TB, HIV/AIDS and Malaria, Zambia) |
| 17:15 – 17:40 | **Moderated panel discussion**  
Challenges and solutions to viral load monitoring in resource-limited settings  
Moderator: Catherine Hankins (Amsterdam Inst. for Global Health and Dev., Netherlands)  
Panellists:  
François Venter (University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa)  
Linda-Gail Bekker (Desmond Tutu HIV Centre, South Africa)  
Sue Aitken (Ndlovu Research Consortium, South Africa)  
Michael Gwaba (Community Initiative for TB, HIV/AIDS and Malaria, Zambia)  
Robert Luo (Roche Molecular Systems, USA) |
| 17:40 – 17:55 | **Questions from the audience** |
| 17:55 – 18:00 | **Conclusion**  
Co-Chairs: Linda-Gail Bekker (Desmond Tutu HIV Centre, South Africa)  
Catherine Hankins (Amsterdam Inst. for Global Health and Dev., Netherlands) |
Appendix B: Evaluation form (page 1 of 2)

EXPANDING ACCESS TO VIRAL LOAD MONITORING IN RESOURCE-LIMITED SETTINGS

Symposium in conjunction with INTEREST
Organized by the International AIDS Society-Industry Liaison Forum

Monday, 5 May 2014, 16:00 – 18:00, Lusaka, Zambia

Please complete this anonymous survey and help us evaluate the impact of the symposium and improve similar events.

1. What were the main reasons for attending this symposium? (Please select all that apply.)
   - I have a general interest in viral (VL) monitoring in resource-limited settings (RLS).
   - VL monitoring in RLS has direct implications on my work.
   - To learn more on expanding access to VL monitoring in RLS.
   - To discuss the challenges of VL monitoring in RLS.
   - To share insights on expanding access to VL monitoring in RLS.
   - To network and make new contacts.
   - Other: __________________________

2. What did you gain from attending this symposium? (Please select all that apply.)
   - New insights on expanding VL monitoring in RLS.
   - An opportunity to share ideas with others interested in expanding access to VL monitoring in RLS.
   - An opportunity to advocate for the importance of expanding access to VL monitoring in RLS.
   - Networking opportunity for collaborating with professionals in my field.
   - Networking opportunity for collaborating with professionals in different fields from mine.
   - Other: __________________________

3. Will you use the information presented in your professional activities (if applicable)?
   - Yes: ☐  Maybe: ☐  No: ☐

4. Will you follow up on new contacts made at this symposium?
   - Yes: ☐  Maybe: ☐  No: ☐

5. How would you rate the following parts of the symposium?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Introduction</td>
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<td>Clinical rationales for VL monitoring in RLS</td>
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<td>Laboratory challenges to VL monitoring in RLS</td>
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<td>Community perspective on VL monitoring in RLS</td>
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<td>Panel discussion: Challenges and solutions to VL monitoring in RLS</td>
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<td>Conclusion</td>
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Appendix B: Evaluation form (page 2 of 2)

6. How would you rate the organization of the symposium?

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<th>Excellent</th>
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<td>Choice of topic</td>
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<td>Choice of contributors</td>
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<td>Direction and time management by co-chairs and moderators</td>
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<td>Overall organization</td>
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7. How could future IAS-ILF symposiums be improved?

- Improve general organization of the symposium.
- Provide more information about the symposium in advance.
- Broaden the scope of the topic discussed.
- Narrow the scope of the topic discussed.
- Allow more time for presentations.
- Allow more time for the panel discussion.
- Allow more time for an interactive discussion with the audience.

8. Which events do you generally attend?

- INTEREST
- ICASA
- ICAP
- CROI
- International AIDS Conference
- IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention
- Virology Education events (other than INTEREST)
- Other conferences:

9. What is your main affiliation?

- Hospital/clinic
- Academia (university, research institute, etc.)
- Governmental
- Non-governmental
- Intergovernmental (e.g. UN, WHO)
- Community-based organization
- Media organization
- Industry: Antiretrovirals
- Industry: Diagnostics
- Other (please specify):

10. In which country are you based?


11. Is there any comment, suggestion and/or question you would like to share?


Thank you for your time. Your contribution is truly appreciated.