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Perspectives on the acceptability of HCRC trials: the challenges for physicians and PLWHIV (ANRS APSEC)

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Background: The latest progress in HIV medicine and research has reinforced the belief that HIV infection might be curable. recently launched the “Towards an HIV cure” initiative to promote multidisciplinary research for a safe, affordable and scalable cure. The main goal of our survey was to collect data based on patients’ and healthcare professionals’ points of view about the HCRC trials and to identify the diverse motivations and barriers which may influence willingness to participate (WTP). Using data from this first phase, we will create guidelines to ensure that recruitment in these upcoming trials is ethical and patient-focused.

Methods: The French survey was recently conducted to collect information on the norms and beliefs related to clinical trials, especially trials without direct benefits in the current post-HAART context. Data were collected from 3 PLWH-only focus group meetings PLVIH (n=21) and 3 healthcare professional-only meetings (n=30).

Results: Four women and 17 men participated in the PLWH focus group sessions. Thirteen providers, 10 doctors and 7 caregivers participated in the sessions for healthcare professionals.

An analysis of all six meetings identified three primary and often opposing acceptability ‘positions’ or ‘stances’, which developed over the course of each focus group meeting.

The first position was strongly based on participants’ comparison of the trials with the pre-HAART trial era.

The second position concerned the fact that the new strategies could undermine the progress made by previous work, not only from a clinical point of view, but also from the perspective of PLWH behaviours.

The third position reflects general HIV culture which not only accepts the risks of participating in new trials, but embraces innovation and pushes others to continue innovation.

Conclusions: The various topics discussed in the focus group meetings highlighted the profound importance of the individual’s personal history with HIV and also regarding a culture of innovation and the patient provider relationship.