

PHACS Adolescent Master Protocol
Participant Summary

Title: Discontinuation of Antiretroviral Therapy among Children with Perinatally Acquired HIV Infection.

Authors: George Siberry, Kunjal Patel, Sandra Burchett, Melanie Bacon, Rohan Hazra, Jennifer Read, George Seage, Lynne Mofenson, Miriam Chernoff, and Russell Van Dyke, for the PHACS Team.

Study Description: Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is recommended for most HIV-infected infants and children. But, in most clinics, there are youths who start ART at a younger age but end up stopping. We wanted to describe those youths in PHACS who stopped their ART for at least 6 months and yet seemed to remain well.

Study Population: There are 244 HIV-infected youths in PHACS with full information for this analysis. They were 7-15 years old when they started the study. All have been infected with HIV since birth.

Results: We found that 13 youths were not receiving ART when they started PHACS. Nine of these youths stayed off ART at least 6 months without having trouble with their T cells or getting sick. The most common reason they stopped ART was that their doctor thought treatment was not needed. Based on their medical history, these youths never reached a stage of AIDS or low T cells in the past. Most did well off ART for several years. Two participants restarted ART while on PHACS but not because of T cells dropping or worsening HIV illness.

Conclusions: 4% of these PHACS participants stopped ART for at least 6 months without having their HIV illness or T cells get worse. These youth may be different from youth who reached AIDS stage or low T cells in the past. These observations may help us design a study to try new ways to safely stop ART use (even if for a limited time) in HIV-infected youth having problems with their ART.

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