Novel dual HIV maintenance therapy with nevirapine plus lamivudine retain viral suppression through 144 weeks-A proof-of-concept study

Christian R. Kahlert, M Cipriani & Pietro Vernazza

OBJECTIVES
The aim of this proof-of-concept study is to test feasibility and efficacy of NVP plus Lamivudine (3TC) as novel simplified HIV maintenance dual therapy (DT) strategy.

METHODS
Patients under combined antiretroviral treatment (cART) with fully suppressed HIV plasma viral load (pVL) >24 months-whereof >6 months on an NVP-containing regimen-were switched to oral NVP plus 3TC for 24 weeks. Patients could then decide whether to continue DT or return to the previous cART. HIV pVL was monitored monthly until week 144. The primary outcome was confirmed viral failure (RNA >100 copies/ml). Low-level detection of HIV-RNA in plasma was compared in each patient with pre-study viral load measurements.

RESULTS
Twenty patients were included, switched to DT and all completed week 24. One patient decided thereafter to discontinue study participation for personal reasons. After a total of 144 observation weeks, none of the patients failed. The frequency of low-level HIV-RNA detection was not different from the period before randomization.

CONCLUSIONS
Our findings are surprising but given the nature of a proof-of-concept study, the results do not support the use of this dual regimen. However, as this dual HIV maintenance strategy was feasible and effective, over a period of 144 weeks, we suggest NVP plus 3TC warrants further evaluation as potential maintenance option in patients tolerating nevirapine. A properly sized multicentre non-inferiority trial is ongoing to further evaluate the value of this DT maintenance strategy.
type: journal paper/review (English)
date of publishing: 23-09-2020
journal title: PLoS ONE (15/9)
ISSN electronic: 1932-6203
pages: e0237770