

**THE COUNSELING AID ON ADVANCED
HIV DISEASE (AHD) IS A DISCUSSION GUIDE
FOR USE BY ADHERENCE COUNSELORS
DURING COUNSELING SESSIONS WITH AHD
CLIENTS AND DURING EDUCATION SESSIONS
WITH SUPPORT GROUPS OF PEOPLE LIVING
WITH HIV IN THEIR MEETINGS.**

COUNSELING AID ON ADVANCED HIV DISEASE

Developed by PLAN Health Advocacy and Development Foundation (PLAN Foundation), Nigeria and Positive Empowerment for Treatment Access, Adherence and Support Foundation in collaboration with the African Community Advisory Board (AFROCAB) and Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHA), through the generous support and partnership of Unitaid.

AFROCAB



WHAT IS ADVANCED HIV DISEASE (AHD)



All HIV-positive adults, adolescents and children over five years diagnosed with CD4 count below 200 cells /mm³ or have certain illnesses are classified to have AHD.

All HIV-positive children under five years are classified to have AHD.

WHAT ARE CD4 CELLS?

- CD4 cells are infection- fighting white blood cells.
- The fewer CD4 cells you have, the more you are at risk of illnesses.
- Many people living with HIV start treatment with a low CD4 count.



WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AHD AND CD4



- HIV-positive persons with AHD have a higher risk of infections, illnesses and mortality.
- CD4 testing helps to identify HIV-positive persons with AHD.
- Everyone newly diagnosed with HIV or re-entering care should get a CD4 test.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON ILLNESSES ASSOCIATED WITH AHD



- Tuberculosis
- Cryptococcal Meningitis
- Severe bacterial infection
- Pneumocystis Jirovecii pneumonia
- Toxoplasmosis
- Histoplasmosis



WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT AHD?

- **The best way to prevent AHD is to start ART when your CD4 count is high.**
- **Everyone should start ART as soon as possible after they are diagnosed, whatever their CD4 count.**
- **Continuing to take ART consistently is also very important in order to prevent AHD.**



WHAT IF YOUR CD4 COUNT IS ALREADY LOW ?

- Starting ART right away gives you the best chance of getting better and avoiding illnesses, even with a very low CD4 count.
- People with AHD need a special package of care, including Counselling, ART, screening tests and medicines to prevent or treat other infections.
- They also need information so that they can be comfortable with their decision to start ART.



WHAT ABOUT TUBERCULOSIS (TB)



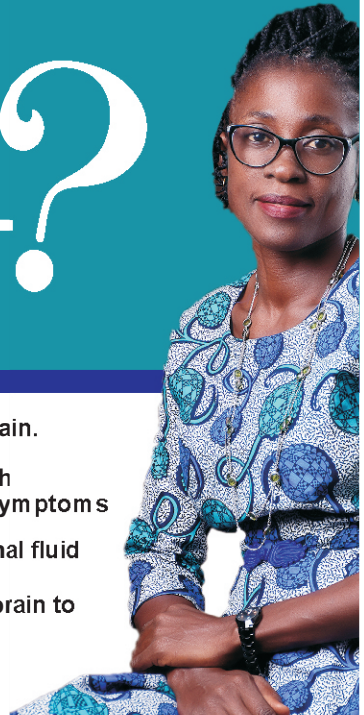
- **TB is the leading cause of illness and death among people living with HIV – especially people with AHD and those who are not yet taking ART.**
- **Symptoms include coughing, fever, night sweats and weight loss.**
- **People with AHD who have TB symptoms should have special test done to see if the symptoms are due to TB or other causes**
- **People diagnosed with TB should start TB treatment before starting ART.**

HOW DO I TEST FOR AND PREVENT TB ?



- **Everyone starting ART will be screened for TB. Adults, adolescents and children who do not have TB should be offered TB preventive treatment.**
- **All people with TB symptoms should get a sputum test called Xpert MTB/ RIF.**
- **Adults, adolescents and children who are very ill and/or have a CD4 count below 200 cells/mm³ should get a urine test called TB-LAM.**

WHAT IS CRYPTOCOCCAL MENINGITIS



- Cryptococcal meningitis is a serious fungal infection of the brain.
 - The CrAg test can help to determine whether someone with AHD has cryptococcal infection even before the develop symptom s
 - For positive blood CrAg tests, a special test that removes spinal fluid from the back to test whether the infection has spread to the brain to
 - Depending on the results, a combination of Amphotericin B, cause meningitis or not is performed.
- Flucytosine and Fluconazole will be needed for treatment.

WHAT ABOUT SEVERE BACTERIAL INFECTIONS (SBI)?

- People with AHD may develop SBI.
- Cotrimoxazole protects against some but not all SBI.
- Pneumococcal vaccine can also help to prevent SBI but this is often given to children.
- Where SBI is diagnosed, treatment will be based on laboratory results.



WHAT IS PNEUMOCYSTIS JIROVECI PNEUMONIA (PCP)?



- **PCP, a fungal infection, is a common cause of illness and death among adults, adolescents and children with AHD.**
- **Symptoms are: cough, chest pain, difficulty breathing, fever and tiredness.**
- **It can be prevented and treated with cotrimaxozole.**
- **Everyone with AHD should receive cotrimaxozole (or dapsone) to help prevent PCP and other illnesses.**

WHAT IS TOXOPLASMOSIS?

- **Toxoplasmosis, a common infection caused by a protozoan parasite can make people very ill if their CD4 count is under 200 cells/mm³.**
- **Symptoms may be similar to those of cryptococcal meningitis which may include headaches, blurred vision, seizures and poor coordination.**
- **Cotrimoxazole can be used to prevent and treat it.**



WHAT IS HISTOPLASMOSIS?



- **Histoplasmosis is a fungal infection that occurs among patients with AHD.**
- **Symptoms are similar to that of TB, may include cough, fever, weight loss, restlessness, night sweats.**
- **Once diagnosed, treatment is with anti-fungal medications such as Amphotericin B and Itraconazole.**

HOW DO I STAY HEALTHY?



- Getting tested for HIV, Starting and adhering to ART can prevent HIV from weakening the immune system.
- For people with advanced HIV disease, taking ART can help the immune system to recover, and other medicines can protect against opportunistic infections.