

# *The effect of disclosure on adherence in HIV positive children in a clinical trial setting: A retrospective cohort study.*

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**Objective:** An increasing number of caregivers face the difficulty of disclosure of HIV status to their HIV positive children. The aim of this study was to examine the role of disclosure on ART adherence and laboratory outcomes (viral load and CD4 count).

**Methods:** A retrospective cohort study of children enrolled in one of two studies was conducted. We compared outcomes (adherence, CD4 counts and HIV viral load) pre and post disclosure. Adherence and viral loads were categorized as binary variables (adherent or non-adherent and suppressed or unsuppressed respectively) and compared using McNemar's chi square test while Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to compare continuous CD4 counts.

**Results:** 73 participants were included. The sample was gender balanced with 52% females. Most children have been disclosed to fully and are aware that their illness is HIV (60.3%). ART adherence for the 68 participants with both pre and post data showed no difference pre and post disclosure ( $p = 0.804$ ) nor was there any significant change in viral load suppression ( $p = 0.22$ ) although the proportion suppressed decreased from 92% to 86%. CD4 count data on 43 participants showed no difference ( $p = 0.293$ ). The median CD4 pre disclosure was 877 compared to 794 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> post disclosure.

**Conclusion:** In this setting disclosure seemed to play no role in calculated adherence nor laboratory markers of adherence.