



News briefs

CTN semi-annual meetings will be held in Toronto from April 11-14. The fall meetings will be in Montreal from October 24-27. Go to www.hivnet.ubc.ca for updates.

The next submission deadline for pre-final and final proposals is June 3, 2011. Related documents for study proposals may be found at www.hivnet.ubc.ca under *Research Services*.

The 6th IAS Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention will be held in Rome, Italy from July 17-20, 2011. Hosted by the International AIDS Society, the conference will feature reports on the latest developments in basic, clinical and prevention science. For more info go to www.ias2011.org.

Jacqueline Sas, CTN Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme & Committees Manager, presented on Network activities at Quebec's annual HIV Francophone symposium, *Journées québécoises VIH* on March 19 in Montreal.

CTN investigators will be active at the annual conference for the Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR) in Toronto, April 14-17. See the back page for presentations. For more on CAHR go to www.cahr-conference-acrv.ca.



CIHR IRSC

The CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and sponsored by the University of British Columbia and St. Paul's Hospital (Providence Health Care).

Bridging core scientific teams with key prevention researchers

New CTN Core expands clinical care to HIV's most vulnerable communities

Uniting clinical research with social science for the first time in the CTN's 20-year history are Drs. John Gill (Southern Alberta HIV Clinic) and Catherine Worthington (University of Victoria), co-leaders of the newly established Prevention and Vulnerable Populations Core.

In efforts to engage more Canadian researchers and vulnerable populations, the Network established a new Core and appointed, for the first time, a non-clinician as the co-lead.

"The biggest impediments to delivering effective health care are social constraints — abuse, poverty, lack of resources," explains long-standing CTN scientific researcher Dr. Gill. "This co-leadership offers an important avenue in improving HIV care that has not been extensively explored."

Dr. Catherine Worthington has extensive experience in what she terms, "the softer-side of research", those complex and multi-dimensional social issues. Dr. Worthington's vast community connections will be a huge plus to developing innovative clinical interventions.

The PVP Core will focus on Aboriginal Peoples but not to the exclusion of other vulnerable populations such as IDU, pregnant women, immigrants, refugees, and people living in remote communities.

Off to a kicking start, the PVP Core already has three pilot studies underway and expects to add more this spring. To find out about the PVP Core and CTN's prevention studies, visit www.hivnet.ubc.ca.



PVP Core co-leaders Drs. Catherine (Cathy) Worthington and John Gill.

CANFAR moves west

The Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR) has enhanced a long-standing partnership with the CTN by setting up a Vancouver office housed within the CTN's National Centre. "We have been supporting western Canada's internationally recognized researchers for twenty years and this extended presence will increase our engagement and collaboration with this region and its communities," says CANFAR president Christopher Bunting.

Established in 1987, CANFAR is the only independent charitable organization in Canada that provides funding for HIV/AIDS research. Since 1997, it has been a financial supporter of the CTN's Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme, helping to build the careers of young investigators. CANFAR will now be increasing its commitment to fund a full fellowship valued at \$50,000 per year.

CANFAR is a dedicated leader in the fight against HIV. To date the Foundation has funded over \$17 million for small start-up research projects. Through education and prevention programs, CANFAR works to empower youth and improve the lives of those living with HIV.

"We are very excited by the prospect of new opportunities with CANFAR on both the local and national stage," says CTN's Chief Administrative Officer David Cox.

The westward expansion will kick off in Vancouver with a CIHR sponsored Café Scientifique in May that will address HIV prevention issues among youth. For more information go to www.canfar.com.



David Cox and Jacqueline Sas from the CTN's National Centre with Christopher Garland (CANFAR Board Director), Dr. Deborah Money (Women's Health Research Institute, Vancouver) and Christopher Bunting (CANFAR president).

Trials to watch

CTN 260 — Raltegravir switch study
Dr. Marina Klein (Montreal Chest Institute). This Phase II study will aim to evaluate the safety and feasibility of switching from a ritonavir boosted PI-based therapy to raltegravir for 48 weeks in co-infected persons with significant liver fibrosis. The study builds on the valuable early data acquired in CTN 222 – The Canadian co-infection cohort, one of the largest HIV-HCV co-infection cohorts worldwide. Study researchers believe that switching to raltegravir will lead to a significant reduction in liver fibrosis.

CTNPT 005 — Measuring cognition in HIV In a new CTN pilot study Drs. Marie-Josée Brouillette and Marina Klein (Montreal Chest Institute) are teaming up to measure cognitive decline in the most at risk individuals. Researchers will use a CANTAB®, a computerized neurocognitive assessment tool, to measure cognitive decline in participants during two clinic visits over one year. The sensitivity and specificity of the CANTAB will be compared to that of a standard neurocognitive testing battery. Results of this pilot study may generate important data for future clinical trials aimed at maintaining or improving cognitive functioning in at-risk individuals.

Results at CROI 2011

CTN 239 — Immunotherapeutic agent in combination with ART followed by ART interruption
Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy's (Montreal Chest Institute) Phase II study of an autologous dendritic cell immunotherapy (AGS-004) showed positive outcomes in primary endpoint of viral load control. Researchers concluded that the experimental treatment resulted in an unexpectedly long delay in viral rebound, time to peak viral load during structured treatment interruption and a reduced viral load when compared to pre-ART levels. Dr. Routy will continue the investigation of AGS-004 further in a CTN supported Phase IIB study (CTN 256).



CAAN's Research and Policy Manager Renée Masching, Dr. Jack Janvier and community based research facilitator Marni Amirault at CAAN's Wise Practices.

CTN at Wise Practices III

CTN investigator Dr. Jack Janvier (Southern Alberta HIV Clinic, Calgary) presented a workshop on the use of traditional and alternative medicines at Wise Practices III in Halifax. In partnership with the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN), Dr. Janvier will be gathering data over the coming year for a study looking at the use of traditional versus standard therapy among Aboriginal HIV-positive participants.

CAAN members Renée Masching and Marni Amirault will be presenting on OCAP principles (ownership, control, access, and possession) at the CTN semi-annual meetings in Toronto on April 13 prior to the first Core meeting for Prevention and Vulnerable Populations.

Morning boost

For your morning boost of fresh research, join the CTN Postdoctoral Fellows and delegates from CAHR at the annual CTN Postdoctoral Breakfast Symposium in Toronto on Saturday, April 16 at 7:15 am.

Five of the CTN's Postdoctoral Fellows will be presenting:

Dr. Adefowope Oduyungbo (CTN James Kreppner): "A randomized prospective open label study of switching to raltegravir based ART compared to maintaining ritonavir boosted PI-based ART on liver fibrosis progression in HIV-HCV co-infected patients."

Dr. María Fabiana De Rosa (CTN): "HIV prevention by microbicides: What are drug transporters trying to tell us?"

Dr. Richard Sloan (ViiV Healthcare/CTN): "Cell-to-cell transmission of HIV-1 is susceptible to entry inhibition and involves viral endocytosis."

Dr. Lawrence Mbuagbaw (CTN International Fellow): "Recruitment and baseline data for the Cameroon mobile phone sms trial: an update."

Dr. Bertrand Lebouché (CTN/Merck): "Sexual risks of HIV transmission among HIV-serodiscordant and concordant couples in Montreal."

New awards and renewals for the 2011-2012 cycle will be announced at the symposium by Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme & Committees Manager, Jacqueline Sas.

CTN continues to build capacity in resource-limited countries by offering an interational fellowship to scientists developing HIV and prevention studies. This award is made possible by Network fundraising, individual donations and other sources outside of CIHR's main funding to the CTN.

CAMPS trial

CTN's first International Fellow, Dr. Lawrence Mbuagbaw (Yaoundé Central Hospital, Cameroon), is leading CAMPS — The Cameroon mobile phone sms trial: a protocol for a randomized controlled trial of mobile phone text messaging versus usual care for improving adherence to highly active antiretroviral therapy.

This single-centre trial investigates the potential of weekly reminders and motivational text messages, compared to standard of care, as an intervention to non-adherence behaviors such as forgetfulness. "CAMPS uses an extremely low-cost way to try and improve the lives of those living with HIV," explains Dr. Mbuagbaw. Researchers will send out text messages and record delivery over a six-month period. The study's primary outcomes are adherence measured by the visual analogue scale, self report and pharmacy re-fill; the secondary outcomes are clinical — weight, opportunistic infections, among others — and biological (viral load, CD4 count).

The trial successfully recruited 198 HIV-positive persons aged 21 and older, who own a mobile phone and can read text messages. "Receiving an sms is a cue to action for a more adherent behavior," says Dr. Mbuagbaw. Results from this trial may contribute to the growing body of evidence on the use of mobile phone technology to improve health outcomes in resource-limited settings.

**New Message From:
YCH/ATC
HELLO, YOU ARE
IMPORTANT TO YOUR
FAMILY. PLEASE
REMEMBER TO TAKE
YOUR MEDICATION!
IF YOU NEED HELP,
REPLY TO THIS
MESSAGE OR CALL
US AT:
+237 xxxxx xxxxx**

CTN 147**Early vs delayed pneumococcal vaccination**

Enrolled	80
Principal Investigator	Dr. Walter Schlech
Status	Completed

CTN 194**Peg-interferon and citalopram in co-infection (PICCO)**

Enrolled	73
Target Enrolment	76
Principal Investigator	Dr. Marina Klein
Status	Enrolling

CTN 198**Supportive therapy for adherence to antiretroviral treatment (STAART)**

Enrolled	100
Target Enrolment	112
Principal Investigators	Dr. Louise Balfour Dr. William Cameron
Status	Follow-up

CTN 208**HAART alone or with Remune® vaccine followed by STI in early HIV infection/observation of recent HIV infection**

Enrolled	8
International Enrolled	28
Principal Investigator	Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy
Status	Completed

CTN 216**Argon plasma coagulation for anal dysplasia in MSM**

Enrolled	20
Principal Investigators	Dr. Alexandra de Pokomandy Dr. George Ghattas
Status	Completed

CTN 222**Canadian co-infection cohort**

Enrolled	950
Target Enrolment	950
Principal Investigator	Dr. Marina Klein
Status	Enrolment completed

CTN 233**Pharmacokinetics of antiretroviral (ARV) therapy in HIV-positive women**

Enrolled	98
Principal Investigator	Dr. Mona Loutfy
Status	Completed

CTN 236**HPV vaccine in HIV-positive girls and women**

Enrolled	185
Target Enrolment	500
Principal Investigator	Dr. Deborah Money
Status	Enrolling

CTN 238**The MAINTAIN study**

Enrolled	135
Target Enrolment	218
Principal Investigator	Dr. William Cameron
Status	Enrolling

CTN 240**Valacyclovir in delaying antiretroviral treatment entry (VALIDATE) trial**

Enrolled	28
Target Enrolment	480
Principal Investigators	Dr. Sharon Walmsley Dr. Darrell Tan
Status	Enrolling

CTN 242**Canadian observational cohort (CANOC) collaboration**

Target Enrolment	18,000 (from 6 databases)
Principal Investigator	Dr. Robert Hogg
Status	Ongoing

CTN 244**STOP HIV and AIDS in IDU**

Enrolled	772
Target Enrolment	2,000
Principal Investigator	Dr. Julio Montaner
Status	Enrolling

CTN 246**Chloroquine to reduce T cell immune activation in HIV-infected individuals**

Enrolled	20
Principal Investigator	Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy
Status	Follow-up

CTN 247**Canadian cohort of HIV-positive slow progressors**

Enrolled	148
Target Enrolment	150
Principal Investigator	Dr. Cécile Tremblay
Status	Enrolling

CTN 253**H1N1 flu vaccine study in HIV-positive adults**

Enrolled	150
Principal Investigator	Dr. Curtis Cooper
Status	Reporting

CTN 254**Predictive value of inflammatory biomarkers for untreated HIV disease progression and their response to initiation of antiretroviral therapy**

Target Enrolment	580
Principal Investigator	Dr. Darrell Tan Dr. Mark Hull
Status	Enrolling

CTN 256**Phase IIB study of AGS-004 on host control of HIV replication during analytical treatment interruption**

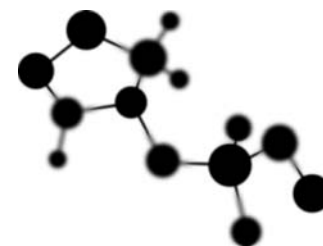
Enrolled	1
Target Enrolment	12
Principal Investigator	Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy
Status	Enrolling

CTN 257**Impact of HIV on mucosa**

Enrolled	4
Target Enrolment	90
Principal Investigator	Dr. Jean-Pierre Routy
Status	Enrolling

CTN 260**Raltegravir switch study**

Target Enrolment	40
Principal Investigator	Dr. Marina Klein
Status	Pending onset

**CTNPT 002****SPOT**

Dr. Mark Wainberg (McGill AIDS Centre), along with Joanne Otis (Université du Québec à Montréal), is co-leading a prevention-based study that provides rapid HIV testing (the drawing of blood by finger needle-prick into a capillary) and measures the impact of counselling on sexual risk behaviours in men who have sex with men (MSM).

The study compares the impacts of three types of interventional counselling on reducing sexual risk behaviours: Routine counselling — most common practice provided by health professionals; classic counselling — based on Quebec guidelines for HIV counselling; and motivational counselling — based on theoretical frameworks and techniques for motivational interviewing. Researchers believe that motivational counselling will prove most effective as an intervention. Results of SPOT could encourage knowledge transfer and training on motivational counselling to health professionals who practice HIV testing.

Look for SPOT researchers presenting at the 20th Annual Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS Research, Toronto, April 14-17, 2011.

For more information on these and other trials, please visit our website at www.hivnet.ubc.ca or call the CTN at 1-800-661-4664.

News briefs

Michelle Jones, RN, MSc, GDBA, joined the Network as Manager, Clinical Trials Support in January 2011. In this role, Michelle will oversee concept development for the CTN as well as manage research promotion and development at the Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences (CHÉOS). A warm welcome to Michelle!

CAC member **Chuck Osborne** has been elected as the B.C. representative to the Canadian Treatment Action Council (CTAC). CTAC promotes informed public policy and builds awareness on issues that impede access to treatment and health care for people living with HIV. Congratulations Chuck!

The Network welcomes new members to the Core Research teams. Clinical Management Science Core: Rebecca Campbell (Core Coordinator) and Munazza Mudassar (Research Coordinator); Co-infections and Concurrent Diseases Core: David Mackie (Research Assistant); Prevention and Vulnerable Populations: Rebecca Lee (Research Assistant); Vaccines and Immunotherapies Core: Johanna Spaans (Research Associate).

CTN investigators Drs. Jean-Pierre Routy and Bertrand Lebouché are organizing a 30 year retrospective on HIV from a francophone perspective from May 9-11, 2011 at the 79th ACFAS conference in Sherbrooke. For more info, contact Anita.Ariyarahajh@muhc.mcgill.ca.



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The CTN is now accepting donations to help build capacity for HIV clinical research. Go to www.hivnet.ubc.ca for more information.

Networks



CTN 242 Principal Investigator Dr. Robert Hogg (back row, third from right) and researchers of the Canadian observational cohort (CANOC).

CANOC Retreat

CANOC researchers gathered for the second annual CANOC retreat on February 4, 2011 at Clinique médicale l'Actuel in Montreal. At the meeting, the team was updated on past projects and new ones including Dr. Mona Loutfy's five-year CANOC-affiliated study CHIWOS (Canadian HIV women and reproductive health cohort study), funded by CIHR.

Publications and presentations

This list includes some of the recent publications and presentations of Network investigators and staff.

Thorpe J, Saeed S, Moodie EE, Klein MB; for the Canadian co-infection cohort study (CTN 222). "Antiretroviral treatment interruption leads to progression of liver fibrosis in HIV-hepatitis C virus co-infection." *AIDS*. 2011 Feb 16.

Tremblay C, Rouleau D, Fontin C, Toma E, Sylla M, Baz M, Sampalis J, Trautman L, Sékaly RP, Boivin G. "Immunogenicity and tolerability of an inactivated and adjuvanted pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine, in HIV-1-infected patients." *Vaccine*. 2011 Feb; 29(7): 1359-1363.

Wainberg MA. "AIDS: Drugs that prevent HIV infection." *Nature*. 2011 Jan 20; 469(7330): 306-7.

Vilija RJ, Barnett PG, Chow A, Bayoumi AM, Griffin SC, Sun H, Holodniy M, Brown ST, Tassos CK, Cameron DW, Youle M, Sculpher M, Anis AH, Owens DK. "Effect of treatment interruption and intensification of antiretroviral therapy on health-related quality of life in patients with advanced HIV: A randomized, controlled trial." *Med Decis Making*. 2011 March 7. [Epub ahead of print]

18th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, February 27- March 2, 2011, Boston.

Brenner B, Stephens D, Wainberg J, Roger M, Moisi D, Hardy I, Spira B, Routy JP, Koopmand J, Wainberg MA, and the Montreal primary HIV infection (PHI) and SPOT cohorts. "Distinct patterns of onward spread of the Montreal Male-Sex-Male (MSM) epidemic." Poster 1046.

Cooper C, Klein M, Walmsley S, Haase D, Scheifele D, and Publ Hlth Agency of Canada-Canadian Inst of Hlth Res Influenza Res Network. "A randomized trial to compare the immunogenicity and efficacy of adjuvanted pandemic H1N12009 vaccine with or without booster in HIV+ adults." Poster 907.

Habayeb M, Odueyungbo A, Rollet K, Saeed S, Walmsley S, Pick N, Conway B, Cox J, Hull M, Klein M, and Canadian co-infection cohort study CTN 222.

"LDL level as a prognostic tool for liver disease progression in HIV/HCV co-infection." Poster 925.

Hull M, Moore D, Chan K, Milan D, Klein M, Loutfy M, Cooper C, Machouf N, Raboud J, Hogg R. "Effect of fixed-dose combinations of NRTIs on regimen switching during first year of therapy: Analysis of the Canadian observational cohort collaboration (CANOC)." Abstract L-193.

Routy JP, Angel J, Vezina S, Tremblay C, Loutfy M, Gill J, Baril JG, Smail F, Jain R, Nicolette C, and AGS-004-001 study group. "Final analysis of a phase 2 study of an autologous DC immunotherapy showed positive outcomes in primary endpoint of viral load control, and favorable safety and immunogenicity profile, in subjects undergoing structured treatment interruption of ART." Poster 385.

Tan D, Kaul R, Raboud J, Walmsley S. "Oral tenofovir disoproxil fumarate does not decrease herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) shedding in HIV-infected individuals." Abstract B-131.

20th Annual Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS Research, April 14-17, 2011, Toronto

Blais M, Otis J, Girard M-E, Rousseau R, Wainberg MA and the SPOT Study Group. "Post-exposure (PEP) and pre-exposure (PrEP) prophylaxis use among MSM: Baseline data from the Montreal HIV rapid testing, community-based intervention SPOT." Oral presentation.

Émond G, Otis J, Blais M, Girard ME, Thiboutot C, Rousseau R, Wainberg, MA. "Testing never tested MSM: Baseline data from Montreal project SPOT." Poster.

Langevin S, Jobin C, Deligne B, Coutlée F, Rouleau D, Tremblay C, Fortin C. "RPR titer does not predict neurosyphilis in HIV-infected patients with early syphilis." Poster.

Otis J, Thiboutot C, Blais M, Girard M-E, Rousseau R, Wainberg MA. "Reach and test MSM: SPOT's experience at a community site and at two clinics." Oral presentation.