Project title: UK HIV services' uptake and implementation of long-acting injectable cabotegravir/rilpivirine: a mixed methods study mapping adoption cascades and implementation approaches

Description:

Long-acting (LA) injectable cabotegravir plus rilpivirine (LA CAB+RPV), administered every 2 months, represents an important shift away from daily oral antiretroviral therapy and has been widely welcomed by people living with HIV and clinicians. However, there are currently limited UK real-world data describing how LA CAB+RPV is being implemented across HIV services, nor are there clear estimates of (i) the proportion of people living with HIV who meet eligibility criteria, (ii) how many eligible individuals are offered LA CAB+RPV, and (iii) how many of those offered go on to start treatment. Mapping this "adoption cascade" and identifying the service-level factors that influence progression through each step, is essential to understand variation between services and to maximise equitable uptake, and population uptake and impact of LA CAB+RPV.

Method:

Study design: This is a mixed-methods study combining, 1) quantitative analysis of a service-level "adoption cascade" for long-acting injectable cabotegravir/rilpivirine (LA CAB+RPV) and 2) qualitative exploration of implementation strategies used by UK HIV services to deliver LA CAB+RPV.

Quantitative component: Adoption cascade
Ten UK HIV services have generated an anonymised registry dataset of people assessed as eligible for LA CAB+RPV. Over a 12-month observation period, each site has reported the number of individuals at each cascade step:

1. eligible for LA CAB+RPV,
2. offered a switch from oral ART,
3. accepted and initiated LA CAB+RPV, and
4. retained on LA CAB+RPV for at least 12 months.

Sites will also record reasons for: i) not being offered LA CAB+RPV despite eligibility and (ii) declining the switch when offered. Cascade proportions will be calculated overall and by site to describe variation in uptake and retention.

Qualitative component: Service implementation strategies
Focus groups were conducted with multidisciplinary staff from each of the ten participating HIV services. These explore how services planned, introduced, and sustained LA CAB+RPV delivery. Focus groups have been pseudonymised.

Integration of findings
Quantitative cascade data will be triangulated with qualitative findings to interpret between site variation and identify implementation strategies associated with higher progression through the cascade. The study will produce: i) a national description of adoption cascades for LA CAB+RPV across participating UK HIV services and, ii)

a summary of practical service delivery approaches to support wider implementation.

Skills / experience required:

Strong written and spoken English is essential, as the role will involve reading and summarising qualitative transcripts and contributing to report writing, with opportunities to support manuscript preparation for publication. The postholder should be competent in Excel and comfortable producing basic descriptive statistics (e.g., counts, percentages, and simple summaries).

Key readings

- Jaeger H, Overton ET, Richmond G, et al. Long-acting cabotegravir and rilpivirine dosed every 2 months in adults with HIV-1 infection (ATLAS-2M), 96-week results: a randomised, multicentre, open-label, phase 3b, non-inferiority study. The lancet HIV **2021**; 8(11): e679-e89.
- Venkatesan P. Long-acting injectable ART for HIV: a (cautious) step forward. Lancet Microbe **2022**; 3(2): e94.
- Orkin C, Hayes R, Haviland J, Wong YL, Ring K, Apea V, Kasadha B, Clarke E, Byrne R, Fox J, Barber TJ. Perspectives of People With HIV on Implementing Long-acting Cabotegravir Plus Rilpivirine in Clinics and Community Settings in the United Kingdom: Results From the Antisexist, Antiracist, Antiageist Implementing Long-acting Novel Antiretrovirals Study. Clinical Infectious Diseases. 2025 May 15;80(5):1103-13.

Learning Outcomes

- Develop practical skills in data cleaning, Excel, and basic descriptive statistics.
- Gain experience summarising and coding qualitative focus group transcripts.
- Learn how to integrate quantitative and qualitative findings in a mixed-methods study.
- Build confidence in professional report writing and contribute to outputs suitable for publication
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