

Report back from the CIPHER Global Cohort Collaboration Meeting, 4-5 May 2015

The CIPHER Global Cohort Collaboration held its annual meeting on 4-5 May 2015, in San Servolo, Italy, to discuss current work and next steps. The largest collaboration of paediatric HIV observational cohorts to date, this group represents 250,000 infants, children and adolescents affected by HIV, and 20% of children on antiretroviral treatment worldwide. Two data-sharing projects were launched last year, looking at priority research gaps in paediatric HIV: the duration of first-line antiretroviral treatment in children and the global epidemiology of perinatally HIV-infected adolescents. Investigators convened at the May meeting to look at the first data coming in, and discuss the challenges of harmonizing for the first time such a huge dataset from different cohorts, lessons learned, and next steps.

Looking forward, the group discussed the strength of working together, and identified its added value in being able to look at research gaps in paediatric HIV that cannot be addressed by one cohort alone, specifically issues of major health impact, North-South comparisons and pharmacovigilance studies. Guided by this, the group went through a consultative process of prioritizing research gaps for next projects. In addition to priority research gaps identified through expert consultation, considerations of how the collaboration can inform normative guidance, and also help industry overcome barriers to making optimal paediatric ARVs available more rapidly, were also included. Key topics that emerged were second-line options, the cascade of care, tuberculosis incidence and co-treatment, and pregnancy outcomes of perinatally HIV-infected young women as well as PMTCT pregnancy outcomes.

Adolescent transition to adult care was also identified as a priority research gap, however it was recognized that work was needed before being able to study this as a global project. Following-up on the outcomes of the recent CIPHER/INCC Adolescent Transition workshop, March 28, a working group will be formed identify common definitions and identifiers, define a cascade of adolescent, and develop a common analytical plan, so that current studies can be compared.

By the end of the two-day meeting, participants agreed that the CIPHER Global Cohort Collaboration was maturing into a 'go to' platform of expertise for cohort research and harmonization. CIPHER would like to thank all who participated in the meeting, and all the investigators involved in the Global Cohort Collaboration for their hard work and collaborative spirit, without which this inspiring and powerful work would not be possible.

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