U=U – A Destigmatizing Message Inconsistently Communicated by Clinicians to PLHIV
(Abstract 223)

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Conflict of Interest Statement

• No actual/perceived conflict of interest
Undetectable=Untransmittable (U=U)

“The science really does verify and validate U=U.”

Anthony Fauci, MD
Director, NIAID/NIH
September 2017

SCIENCE: HPTN-052… Partner… Opposites Attract…
Survey Methodology/Content

• 45-question survey to gauge clinician perspectives on HIV, HBV, and HCV clinical management
• Fielded online December 2017-March 2018
• Two survey questions specific to U=U
  – Knowledge about the U=U message
    o “Are you aware that a person living with HIV who has an undetectable viral load for ≥6 months have effectively no risk of sexually transmitting HIV?”
  – Integration of U=U message into clinical practice
    o “Do you communicate the U=U message to your HIV-positive patients with an undetectable viral load for ≥6 months?”
Survey Respondents

- 1,012 respondents from 35 countries

* Psychologist, pharmacist

** Correctional facility, health department
Survey Respondents (continued)

Physician*-Reported Number of HIV+ Patients on ART

- 91-100%
- 81-90%
- 71-80%
- 51-70%
- 1-50%

Physician*-Reported VL Levels for HIV+ Patients

- VL <50 copies/mL
- VL >50 copies/mL
- VL N/A

* Physician n=587
Physicians – “Yes”
* Physician n=587

- 74% Yes
- 26% No

Nurses/Nurse Practitioners – “Yes”
* Nurse/Nurse Practitioner n=216

- 85% Yes
- 15% No

Physicians who Responded “No” – Africa (42%), Asia (24%), Europe (17%), Latin America (12%), North America (5%)
U=U Communication

Physicians – “Yes”

- Yes: 67%
- No: 33%

ID vs PCP – “Yes”

- ID: 42%
- PCP: 77%

* Physician n=587
Clinician Rationale for Not Communicating U=U Message

• “U=U negates personal responsibility.”
  – U=U says nothing about personal responsibility

• “Patient abandons treatment but continues thinking U=U.”
  – More related to misinformed provider-patient communication

• “Being undetectable reduces risk, but there is still a risk.”
  – Undetectable viral load reduces sexual transmission risk to ZERO; there is not one case of linked sexual transmission of HIV when a positive partner is on ART and viral load is suppressed

• “Adherence is not 100%.”
  – True, but 100% ART adherence is not required to maintain viral suppression (data suggest modern ART requires ~90% adherence)
Conclusions

- U=U is a simple but hugely important campaign based on a solid foundation of scientific evidence*
- U=U is not consistently integrated into practice by clinicians (notably PCPs); HIV-positive patients with undetectable viral loads are thus not hearing message
- Education/support regarding science behind U=U and how to communicate message to HIV-positive patients with undetectable viral loads is needed

* Lancet, November 2017
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• 1,012 clinician-respondents

Let’s Spread the Good News: – U=U