



OPP-ERA

ENDING HIV/AIDS THROUGH
BETTER PATIENT FOLLOW-UP:
INCREASE ACCESS TO
VIRAL LOAD TESTING



OPP-ERA PROJECT CLOSURE BURUNDI - JULY 2019

A project implemented by:

A project supported and financed by:



With the support of Burundi from:

The Ministry of Public Health and AIDS Control, National Association for the Support of HIV-positive and AIDS patients,
Muyinga Hospital, Kamenge University Hospital Centre and Gitega Hospital

THE OPP-ERA PROJECT

4 INTERVENTION COUNTRIES



CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVE THE UNAIDS 3rd 90 OBJECTIVE

Performing viral load testing for people living with HIV makes it possible to monitor the effectiveness of their antiretroviral treatment and can warn of treatment failure and the need to improve treatment adherence. An undetectable viral load also helps to avoid the risk of transmission. This exam is recommended for any HIV patient on ARV treatment. However, access to it is still very limited in sub-Saharan African countries.

Since its inception, the OPP-ERA project has been part of the global strategy to respond to HIV/AIDS, including the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets, and particularly the "3rd 90": to achieve the target of 90% of patients on antiretroviral treatment who have an undetectable viral load by 2020. The OPP-ERA project has helped improve routine access to and use of this test in four countries in West and Central Africa.

This project was supported and funded by Unitaid and implemented by a consortium, led by Solthis, responsible for operational coordination and implementation in Guinea; ANRS, providing co-financing and scientific leadership; Expertise France, providing project implementation in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon; and Sidaction, providing implementation in Burundi.

CREATING FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS IN THE HEALTH SYSTEM

In addition to addressing the technical challenges of conducting this test in a laboratory, the OPP-ERA project also helped to improve all essential factors that facilitate access to viral load testing in a country.

Available at webdoc-chargevirale.solthis.org or at chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org



2013-2019: PROJECT SUCCESSES



11

rehabilitated, equipped and functional laboratories



300

trained health professionals (clinicians, experts, procurement staff, laboratory technicians)



+ more than 81%

of patients have an undetectable viral load and up to 88% at some sites



+ over 230,000

viral load tests performed

THE OPP-ERA PROJECT IN BURUNDI

Bridging the gap in access to viral load testing in Burundi

Access to viral load measurement is a major challenge for Burundi, which has not yet achieved the UNAIDS targets (3rd 90).

The prevalence rate among people living with HIV in 2018 was 0.9%: 63,892 PLWH were on ARV treatment, only 32% of whom had received a viral load test (PNLS/IST data). Access to viral load measurement still faces obstacles related to poor health infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel and complex measurement tools.

In 2014, the OPP-ERA project, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and AIDS Control, introduced viral load testing for the first time in Burundi.

Today, of the 7 functioning platforms in the country, 4 are open platforms, equipped and installed by the OPP-ERA project: 2 in Bujumbura (ANSS and CHUK); 1 in Muyinga (in the north); and 1 in Gitega (central region).

OPP-ERA project partners:

- Ministry of Public Health and AIDS Control
- National Association for the Support of HIV-positive and AIDS patients (ANSS)
- Muyinga Hospital
- Kamenge University Hospital (CHUK)
- Gitega Hospital



40,000 viral load tests performed
from 2014 to the end of 2018



8 laboratory technicians trained

OPP-ERA project successes in Burundi

During 2018, nearly 2/3 of the country's viral load measurements were performed on OPP-ERA platforms. More than 40,000 viral load tests were performed between 2014 and 2018.

88% of patients tested in 2018 via OPP-ERA had an undetectable viral load

8 laboratory technicians were trained in the viral load technique. Throughout the project, they received continuous support, resulting in strengthening the laboratory staff's skills and implementing a quality management system through activities such as regular activity monitoring; formative supervision; the implementation of standardized operating procedures; and support in data analysis. During 2019, technicians from the ANSS, CHUK and Muyinga laboratories participated in the staff-empowerment approach, demonstrating their practical skills.


Since 2017, over 10 training courses, workshops and working groups have been organized to support medical staff in improving the care of HIV-infected patients, raising awareness of the importance of prescribing and using viral load test results. This support was organized in Bujumbura and Muyinga, allowing for genuine dissemination of best practices and concepts related to viral load.

Quantification, orders and receipt of reagents and other consumables for viral load testing were organized with national partners to ensure a smooth transition. In 2018 and 2019, 4 workshops were organized for 20 procurement and logistics managers to share purchasing management tools and the procurement of laboratory products.

What transition to ensure the project sustainability?

After more than 5 years of activity, the OPP-ERA project ends in July 2019. Nevertheless, Burundi is committed to achieving the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets by 2020. To do this, a national strategy to scale up viral load testing is being developed. This strategy will be supported by the Global Fund and implemented by the PNLS/IST (National Programme to Combat HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections).

Thus, the open polyvalent platforms and OPP-ERA project laboratory technicians will be integrated into the national operational plan and will continue their viral load activities with the goal of facilitating access to this test and achieving the UNAIDS 3rd 90.



Achieve and maintain an undetectable viral load for all patients: an aspiration for our laboratories and care facilities.

ANSS Laboratory Technician



Practical resources on HIV viral load at your disposal

A handy toolkit with downloadable documents.

Register today to be informed of the launch in October:



toolkit-chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org

An up-and-running site that will be supplemented with resources and a lessons learned document (in October):



chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org

A web documentary to explain the project's practical implementation:



webdoc-chargevirale.solthis.org

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