

表4 ARTの成績

症例	原疾患	年齢	結婚	ART	転帰
1	骨髄異形成症候群	24	既婚	顕微授精 顕微授精	妊娠 妊娠
2	悪性リンパ腫	21	未婚	顕微授精	(-) (-)
3	悪性リンパ腫	30	既婚	人工授精 顕微授精	(-) (-)
4	精巣腫瘍	33	既婚	顕微授精	妊娠
5	精巣腫瘍	34	既婚	人工授精	(-)
6	骨髄異形成症候群	22	未婚	人工授精	(-)

(-) 妊娠不成功

3. 凍結の可否と前治療との関係

凍結保存しえた177例のうち既治療は34例で、そのうち26例の原疾患は白血病であった。凍結不可26例のうち15例に前治療が行われており、その原疾患は白血病9例、悪性リンパ腫5例であった(表3)。

4. 主な原疾患における精液所見

精巣腫瘍、白血病および悪性リンパ腫の精液所見を比較すると、精子濃度は既治療例で精巣腫瘍例が白血病および悪性リンパ腫例に比べて有意に低かった。また精子運動率は白血病例で未治療群が既治療群に比べ有意に高かった。

ART(生殖援助技術)の実施

リプロダクションセンター開設前を含めて6例の妻に顕微授精もしくは人工授精を行った。成績は表4のようであり、症例1および症例4で妊娠が成立し、児を得た(表4)。

治療前精子凍結保存の問題点

1. 既治療例が多かったこと

全体の25%以上が治療後に来院しており、凍結不可27例中17例を占めた。また凍結可能であった38例でも精液所見不良の傾向にあった。上述したように、既治療例の63.6%が白血病であり、生命予後を重視した緊急の治療を行う必要があった可能性もあるが、問診時精子凍結保存のことについて説明されていない例も少なからず存在した。このことから、精子の凍結保存を組織的に行っている施設の少ない現状では、われわれが腫瘍専門医もしくは患者に対して啓蒙活動をする必要があると考えられた。

2. 未婚者が多かったこと

受診時約75%が未婚であった。原疾患または精子凍結保存ということで若年者が多くなるのは当然のことではあるが、最終的にARTを施行する際に大きな問題となる。実際、凍結開始後に結婚してARTを行う例も存在するが、それはきわめて少ない。積極的に結婚相手を探すよう努力するように勧めているが、パートナーの負担も考えると難しい問題もある。一部には精子凍結保存は既婚者に限るという意見もあり、今後検討を要する課題である。

3. 未成年者が精子凍結保存契約をしたこと

未成年者が9例存在した。当施設の説明書には、本人の意思で凍結保存を行うという意味から成人が望ましいという旨が記載してある。しかし、未成年の希望者からの問い合わせも多く、また権利を考えると凍結の契約は避けられないのが現状である。しかしながら、ほとんどが両親の意向で行われているため、いずれは本人の意思を明確にしてもらった上で契約することが必要であろう。

4. 高齢者が契約したこと

生殖医療対象としては高齢と考えられる50歳以上の患者が7例あり、かつ2例は未婚であった。これらの症例ではART実施は困難な可能性が高い。初診時にこの点を説明して契約をしないよう説得したが、強い希望で凍結保存をする結果になった。この場合、ART以外の目的を設定すべきであると思われるが、結論を出すのはなかなか難しい。

5. 契約者死後の精子の取り扱い

契約者の死亡後、妻が凍結精子を他施設に移

送することを希望するケースが2例あった。契約に凍結保存は本人の生存中に限るという条項があるため、長時間説得した上でこれをあきらめてもらった。また、最近行われた裁判でも死後精子を用いて誕生した児が当事者の子と認知されなかった。これらのことから、この状況下では死後精子の使用はすべきではないことは明白であるが、混乱を避ける意味で法制化されることが望ましい。

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Feature Article

Factors determining prenatal HIV testing for prevention of mother to child transmission in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

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Abstract

Background: The objectives of the study were (i) to evaluate the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) services in Temeke district, Tanzania and (ii) to identify factors for non-acceptance of HIV testing among pregnant mothers in the area.

Methods: A structured questionnaire was used in face-to-face interviews at five health centers in the district. Univariate and multiple logistic regression analyses were used to assess the association of the refusal of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) testing with risk factors.

Results: Two hundred and seventy-three (68.1%) of the participants had already had HIV testing, while 128 (31.9%) had not. Participants' general knowledge of HIV was high, but specific knowledge of mother to child transmission (MTCT) was relatively low. In the multiple logistic regression analysis, frequencies of antenatal clinic visits, awareness of MTCT and intensive family support were significantly and inversely associated with the refusal of HIV testing.

Conclusions: Frequency of antenatal care visits, spreading information on HIV/acquired immune deficiency syndrome especially MTCT, and husbands' intensive support are significant factors for increase of HIV test acceptance among pregnant women in the study area.

Key words

HIV testing, mother to child transmission, pregnant women, Preventing Mother to Child Transmission program, Tanzania.

Mother to child transmission (MTCT) of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the major source of HIV infection in children. There are 40.3 million people infected with HIV globally and 2.3 million are children under 15 years of age. Sub-Saharan Africa remains hardest hit, with 25.8 million people living with HIV. Two-thirds of all people living with HIV are in Sub-Saharan Africa, as are 77% of all women with HIV.¹ In Tanzania, the first acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) cases were diagnosed in 1983.² During the 1990s the prevalence of HIV in Tanzania fluctuated greatly. In 2000 it was reported that approximately 1 800 000 people aged ≥ 15 were living with HIV. Of them, >900 000 women were of reproductive age (15–49 years).³ The main mode of transmission is through heterosexual intercourse, accounting for 78% in 2001, and MTCT ranked second, contributing up to 5%.²

In Tanzania, the estimated number of women who become pregnant per year is 1.3 million and HIV prevalence among women attending antenatal clinics in 2002 was 9.6%.^{2,4,5} In addition, data from the Tanzania Ministry of Health (MOH) show that the risk of transmission from HIV-infected pregnant women to their newborns is 40%, distributed as follows: 10% *in utero*, 20% during labor and delivery, and 10% through breast-feeding.⁴ The Preventing Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) of HIV program aims at reducing MTCT of HIV during pregnancy, childbirth and during breast-feeding. It includes voluntary counseling and testing (VCT), antiretroviral (ARV) treatment and counseling about feeding options (Fig. 1). In 1998, after finding that a short course of the antiretroviral drug Zidovudine (ZDV; GlaxoSmithKline, Middlesex, UK) starting from 36 weeks of pregnancy reduced the rate of MTCT by 50%, a comprehensive PMTCT strategy was developed. The PMTCT project in Tanzania was launched in 1999, and started operation from five centers. In 2002, an evaluation report for the project showed some weaknesses and constraints in PMTCT services.^{6,7} One of the major barriers was its low

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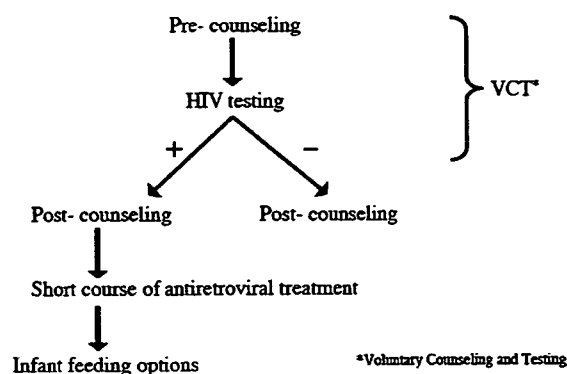


Fig. 1 Preventing Mother to Child Transmission.

acceptance. The report also showed large differences in counseling rates (9–56%), high acceptance of rapid HIV testing among those who received counseling (78–84%), and low short-course ZDV uptake (8–20%).

Temeke district was chosen for the following three reasons. First, the Dar Es Salaam region has the highest HIV/AIDS case rate (235 per 100 000) compared to other regions.⁸ A previous survey showed that prevalence of pregnant women varies by geographical settings, with much higher levels in border towns, along major highways and in urban centers as compared to rural areas.² Second, in the Dar Es Salaam region, the Temeke district represents a typical urban city because the other districts are a center for government and commercial offices and a residential area for foreign and upper classes. Third, although coverage of PMTCT is very limited elsewhere in the country, the project had been extended to the health center level in Temeke.

No study has been done in Tanzania despite that acceptance of the program has been less than optimal. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to determine the reasons for low acceptance of PMTCT and to recommend proper measures to be taken in Tanzania. The objectives of the study were (i) to evaluate the PMTCT services that are currently provided and the knowledge and attitude on counseling and testing of HIV among pregnant mothers in Temeke district, Tanzania and (ii) to identify factors for non-acceptance of counseling and testing for HIV among pregnant mothers in the area.

Methods

Study area

The study was conducted at five health centers in Kasorobo, Mtoni, Rangi Tatu, Round Table and Tambukareli in Temeke district, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania (Fig. 2). Tanzania has a total area of 940 000 km², and is divided into 26 administrative regions and 131 districts. The total population is estimated at

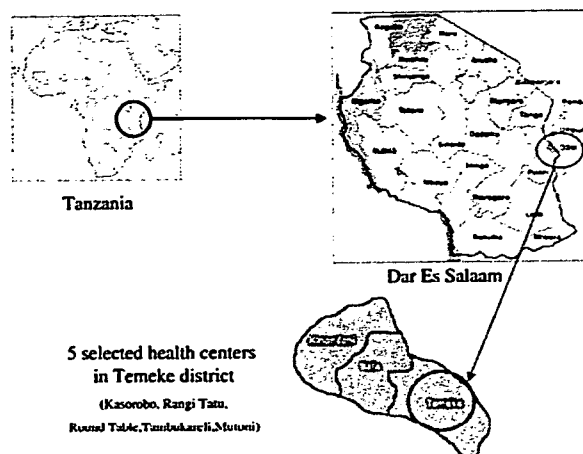


Fig. 2 Map of study site.

approximately 34.5 million and the population growth rate is 2.9% per year.⁹ Although Dar Es Salaam is not a capital anymore, it is still the center of politics and economy. Temeke district (municipality) is in the southern part of the Dar Es Salaam Region. The region consists of three districts and Temeke is the largest one. It has an estimated population of 768 451 and the population growth rate is 7.8% (Temeke municipal council, unpubl. obs., 2004).

Study population

The target population consisted of pregnant women attending antenatal care at the selected health centers where PMTCT programs are implemented. Because the rates of access to antenatal care services were 98% (one visit) and 70% (four times or more) in Tanzania, random sampling was applicable in the present study.¹⁰ Then the sample size was calculated from the previous records in the area using EpiInfo version 6 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, USA) and 401 pregnant women were enrolled.

Study design and procedure

This was an exploratory and cross-sectional study, conducted from August to September 2004. A structured questionnaire was used in face-to-face interviews with pregnant women at the health centers by a trained interviewer in the Swahili language. All women seeking antenatal care were approached individually and asked to participate in the study. Verbal consent was obtained from all participants. Each interview was conducted in an isolated space and lasted approximately 15–20 min. Incentives were not provided for participation. To preserve confidentiality and because of concerns about unnecessary disclosure, the participants' actual HIV status was not

collected. Permission was obtained from Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, Ministry of Health in Tanzania and the Ethical Review Committee, Graduate School of Medicine and Faculty of Medicine, University of Tokyo.

Questionnaire

In order to identify factors associated with refusal of HIV testing among pregnant women, a structured questionnaire was designed. The dependent variable was 'not being tested for HIV'. Demographic factors (age, educational background, religion, marital status, family size and number of children), gestational age, frequencies of health center and antenatal visits, travel time from home to health centers, general knowledge of HIV, specific knowledge of MTCT of HIV, and attitude toward HIV testing were introduced as independent variables.¹¹

For measuring attitude toward HIV testing, the modified HIV-Antibody Testing Attitude Scale developed by Boshamer and Bruce in 1999 was added to the questionnaire.¹² It was used to assess respondent concern about family support, social support, and privacy. Scores on the scales were positively correlated with perceived knowledge about HIV and the likelihood of being tested.¹²

Statistical analysis

Statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS 11.0J program (SPSS Japan, Tokyo, Japan). Univariate and multiple logistic regression analyses were used to assess the association of the refusal of HIV testing with each risk factor. The χ^2 test was used to compare the rates in different categories. Variables that had a significant relationship to the dependent variable at the $P < 0.05$ level were then used in the multiple logistic regression analysis and selected by using backward stepwise procedure.

Results

Characteristics of respondents and acceptance rate of HIV testing

Four hundred and one pregnant women were interviewed at five health centers in the Temeke district. The participants characteristics are given in Table 1. Two hundred and seventy-three (68.1%) had already had HIV testing, while 128 (31.9%) had not. The acceptance rate of testing in the present study was larger than that in 2003 (42.6%). Among the five health centers, no statistical difference was seen in those who had been tested and those who had not. None of the social demographic factors was significantly associated with an acceptance of the HIV testing.

Table 1 Participant characteristics ($n = 401$)

Variables	Mean	SD	<i>n</i>	%
Domicile				
Kasorobo			48	12.0
Mtoni			49	12.2
Rangi Tatu			120	30.0
Round Table			121	30.2
Tambukareli			63	15.7
Age (years)	24.18	5.53		
Gestational age (months)	6.84	1.85		
Education (years)				
≤ 7			362	90.3
> 7			39	9.6
Marital status				
Married			323	80.5
Single			29	7.2
Others			49	12.1
Family size	4.34	2.51		
No. children	1.17	1.39		
Distance to health centers (min)	26.03	24.96		
Transportation				
On foot			290	72.6
By public bus			105	26.2
Others			6	1.5
Travel time (min)	30(mode)			
No. health center visits	2.01	1.34		
No. antenatal care visits	2.67	1.69		
HIV testing				
Tested			273	68.1
Not tested			128	31.9

Among those previously tested, 69.2% of participants ($n = 189$) answered that the final decision was made by themselves, and 52.3% ($n = 67$) of those who had not been tested responded that they would like to be tested in the future. Major reasons of refusing test were the following: 'I don't have enough information about testing' (58.4%), 'I don't know the benefits of knowing my HIV status' (40.4%), 'I can't get any medication if I am found HIV positive' (32.6%) and 'I'm afraid of knowing my HIV status' (31.5%). In contrast, the major reasons for acceptance of testing were the following: 'I'm interested in knowing the results' (98.2%), 'It's beneficial to me' (94.9%), 'It's beneficial to my baby' (94.9%), 'I had enough information about testing' (94.1%) and 'I'm not afraid of knowing the status' (93.4%).

Awareness of HIV

Participant awareness of HIV is shown in Figure 3. A total of 98.2% of those who had been tested for HIV and 98.4% of

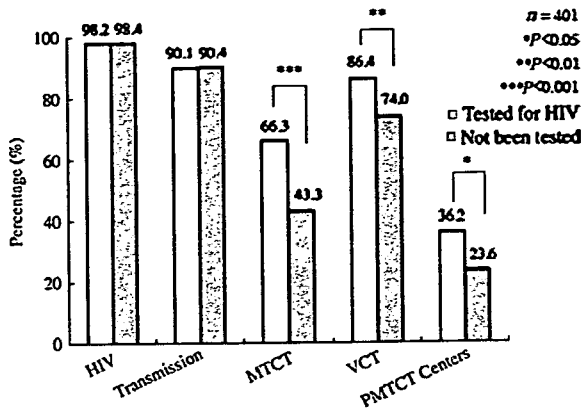


Fig. 3 Awareness of HIV, MTCT, mother to child transmission; PMTCT, prevention of mother to child transmission; VCT, voluntary counseling and testing.

those who had not been tested had heard of HIV/AIDS. A total of 90.1% of those who had been tested and 90.4% of those who had not understood how the disease is spread (main answers: sexual intercourse and sharing sharp edges). In contrast, the awareness of MTCT of HIV was relatively low: 66.3% of those who had been tested and 43.3% of those who had not, answered correctly. Sources of information about MTCT of HIV are given in Figure 4. Among those who were aware of MTCT of HIV, 68.4% answered that they learned about it from antenatal care visits, 43.7% from radio, and 26.9% from friends and neighbors.

Knowledge of MTCT of HIV

The knowledge of MTCT was also low, as shown on Table 2. The percentage of correct responses to the statement that HIV-positive pregnant women can transmit the virus to their babies during pregnancy was 49.4% of those who had been tested for HIV and 45.4% of those who had not been tested; for trans-

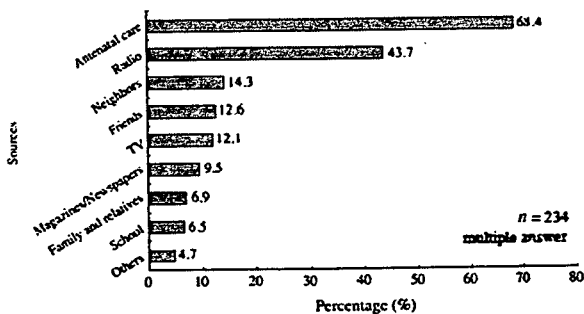


Fig. 4 Sources of information about mother to child transmission of HIV.

Table 2 Knowledge of MTCT of HIV

Queries	Percentage of correct answers	
	Tested for HIV (n = 273)	Not tested for HIV (n = 128)
MTCT during pregnancy?	49.4	45.4
MTCT during delivery?	55.7	50.0
MTCT during breast-feeding?	63.5	60.0
If a baby tests positive means a mother positive?	78.2	70.8
HIV-positive mother always deliver HIV baby?	23.8	20.3
Medicare for MTCT?	38.7	22.3***

***P < 0.001. MTCT, mother to child transmission.

mission during delivery it was 55.7% of those who had been tested and 50.0% of those who had not; and for during breast-feeding it was 63.5% of those who had been tested and 60.0% of those who had not, respectively. Moreover, 23.8% of those who had been tested and 20.3% of those who had not correctly answered that HIV-positive mothers always deliver HIV-positive babies. 38.7% of those who had been tested and 22.3% of those who had not knew of medicine for PMTCT of HIV, and statistical significance was found between these two groups.

Attitude toward HIV testing

The result of the attitude scale is shown in Table 3. It used a three-point Likert scale: agree, neutral, disagree. The mean score of family support (items: ‘My family would support me if I decided to be tested for HIV’, ‘I could easily discuss HIV testing with my family’ etc.) was 11.03 ± 3.204 (range: 9–27). On this scale, 9 was the strongest and 27 was the weakest evidence for family support. The mean score of the social support (items: ‘I would not want anyone to know if I got an HIV test’, ‘People would assume I have HIV if I decided to get tested’ etc.) was 12.15 ± 3.136 (range: 9–25). On this scale, 9 was the strongest and 25 was the weakest evidence for community support. The mean score of privacy (items: ‘I am afraid that if I were to be tested for HIV, my name would go onto public records’, ‘HIV testing information is kept very confidential by the medical staff who do the testing’ etc.) was 9.06 ± 2.414 (range: 7–21). On this scale, 7 was the strongest and 21 was the weakest evidence for protection of their privacy.

Table 3 Attitude scale toward HIV testing

	Range	Mean	SD
Family support	9–27	11.03	3.20
Social support	9–25	12.20	3.14
Privacy	7–21	9.06	2.41

Univariate analysis

Univariate analysis was used to assess the association of the refusal of HIV testing with potential risk factors. The result is shown in Table 4. Participants who were aware of MTCT of HIV, VCT and PMTCT centers, and the lower score of family support, social support and privacy were significantly inversely associated with refusal of HIV testing. Concerning knowledge of medication of PMTCT, the result did not reach statistical significance.

Multiple logistic regression analysis

Multiple logistic regression analysis was used to assess the association of non-acceptance of HIV testing with each risk factor. The following variables were used for selection of independent variables: (i) gestational age; (ii) number of health center visits; (iii) number of antenatal clinic visits; (iv) frequencies of antenatal clinic visit; (v) awareness of MTCT; (vi) awareness of VCT; (vii) awareness of PMTCT sites; (viii) knowledge of MTCT of HIV; (ix) family support; (x) social support; and (xi) privacy.

Table 4 Univariate analysis of HIV testing refusal

Variables	Crude OR	95%CI
No. antenatal clinic visits		
≥2	0.152	0.095–0.245
<2	1	
Awareness of MTCT of HIV		
No	2.575	1.671–3.968
Yes	1	
Awareness of VCT		
No	2.230	1.317–3.776
Yes	1	
Awareness of PMTCT centers		
No	1.834	1.136–2.962
Yes	1	
Knowledge of medication of PMTCT		
No/Don't know	1.132	1.004–1.277
Yes	1	
Score of family support		
>11	1.360	1.245–1.485
≤11	1	
Score of social support		
>12	1.156	1.081–1.236
≤12	1	
Score of privacy		
>9	1.277	1.166–1.399
≤9	1	

CI, confidence interval; MTCT, mother to child transmission; OR, odds ratio; PMTCT, prevention of mother to child transmission; VCT, voluntary counseling and testing.

The independent variables were selected using a stepwise procedure. Three independent variables (frequencies of antenatal clinic visits, intensive family support and awareness of MTCT) were used in the final model (Table 5). These were independently, significantly and inversely associated with refusal of HIV testing.

Discussion

Many pregnant women were willing to take the HIV test, but there were some constraints. Although previous studies noted that the demographic characteristics were associated with acceptance of HIV testing, none of that was statistically significant in the present study.^{13–15} More frequent antenatal visits by the respondents was significantly inversely associated with non-acceptance of the testing in both univariate and multivariate analysis. Late or no prenatal care were variables independently associated with a lower probability of being HIV tested.¹⁶ Beginning antenatal care early in pregnancy and frequency of health care and antenatal care visits might influence the increase of the test acceptance because the PMTCT program is carried out mainly by nurses or counselors.

As shown in the results, general knowledge of HIV was well-spread in the study area, but prevalence of specific knowledge of MTCT remained problematic. The results showed that the acceptance of HIV testing might increase when women understand MTCT of HIV and the role of medication, which is in agreement with previous studies.^{14,17,18} Information and greater knowledge of MTCT of HIV are crucial in improving acceptance of the testing. The low levels of the knowledge can be explained by a lack of necessary information. Radio, friends and relatives as well as antenatal care were the main sources for knowledge of HIV/AIDS in the present study, which was consistent with previous reports.^{2,19,20} Because the educational levels of respondents in the study were relatively low, the dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS may be effective

Table 5 Multiple logistic regression analysis of HIV testing refusal

Selected variables	Adjusted OR	95%CI
No. antenatal clinic visits		
≥2	0.571	0.450–0.724
<2	1	
Awareness of MTCT of HIV		
No	2.423	1.299–4.520
Yes	1	
Score of family support		
>11	1.358	1.231–1.498
≤11	1	

CI, confidence interval; MTCT, mother to child transmission; OR, odds ratio.

through radio and TV. Radio can be made to provide two-way communication, giving women the chance to talk about some of their concerns.

Support from husbands and families was also an important factor in deciding to be tested. Traditionally, in Tanzanian society, women cannot voice their individual opinions.²¹ As shown in Figure 5, 60.9% of women answered that their husbands were the key persons to decide important domestic issues, while 25.5% of women answered that household decisions were made mutually. It suggested that the power and gender relations in this cultural setting are generally in favor of men, and that women tend to conceal matters that may put their relationships with men in jeopardy.²² Moreover, they are fearful of violence, divorce, and of being left alone to die if they are found to be infected with HIV.^{7,23-28} Women need to consult their husbands before getting tested, which is one of the reasons for refusing HIV testing. Although 70.0% of those who were tested answered that they decided by themselves, the PMTCT program should be extended to husband or partners.

In the univariate analysis, lack of community support, privacy and confidentiality of counselors were responsible for the low acceptance of testing. Pregnant women were afraid of being stigmatized or discriminated against in the community as well as being shunned by family.^{7,17,29} Bunting noted that the main causes of this fear were related to insufficient and inaccurate knowledge, fears of death and disease, sexual norms and a lack of recognition of stigma.³⁰ Knowledge of HIV/AIDS and MTCT of HIV should also be expanded to the community for reducing ignorance and prejudice, and HIV counseling plays an important role in reducing women's fear of and stigma associated with the testing.^{31,32}

The present study has several limitations. First, the study was done in only the urban area. In Tanzania as well as other developing countries, rural living conditions are much more difficult than that of urban areas. Stigma and discrimination leading to denial of HIV may be deep-rooted, and agreeing to HIV testing may be more stressful to women living in the local setting. Further research will be needed, especially in rural

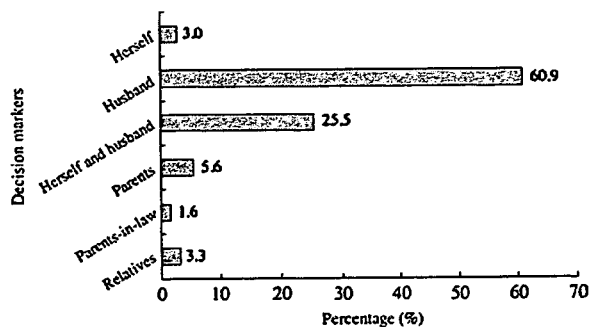


Fig. 5 Final decision on domestic issues.

areas, in order to grasp the whole situation in Tanzania. Second, the study needs to focus more on the counseling aspect of the PMTCT program. Health-care providers play an important role in increasing acceptance of the program and in maintaining participant privacy. Many counselors' training courses were held under the auspices of the MOH and other organizations including non-government organizations in the region. However, the qualities of HIV counseling in the study area are still questionable. Considering these situations, further studies are needed for the successful expansion of the PMTCT program and to ensure the best possible outcome for both HIV-positive pregnant women and their children.

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Anti-Retroviral Drug Resistance-Associated Mutations Among Non-subtype B HIV-1-Infected Kenyan Children With Treatment Failure

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Recently increased availability of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) has mitigated HIV-1/AIDS prognoses especially in resource poor settings. The emergence of ART resistance-associated mutations from non-suppressive ART has been implicated as a major cause of ART failure. Reverse transcriptase inhibitor (RTI)-resistance mutations among 12 non-subtype B HIV-1-infected children with treatment failure were evaluated by genotypically analyzing HIV-1 strains isolated from plasma obtained between 2001 and 2004. A region of *pol-RT* gene was amplified and at least five clones per sample were analyzed. Phylogenetic analysis revealed HIV-1 subtype A1 (n = 7), subtype C (n = 1), subtype D (n = 3), and CRF02_AG (n = 1). Before treatment, 4 of 12 (33.3%) children had primary RTI-resistance mutations, K103N (n = 3, ages 5–7 years) and Y181C (n = 1, age 1 year). In one child, K103N was found as a minor population (1/5 clones) before treatment and became major (7/7 clones) 8 months after RTI treatment. In 7 of 12 children, M184V appeared with one thymidine-analogue-associated mutation (TAM) as the first mutation, while the remaining 5 children had only TAMs appearing either individually (n = 2), or as TAMs 1 (M41L, L210W, and T215Y) and 2 (D67N, K70R, and K219Q/E/R) appearing together (n = 3). These results suggest that “vertically transmitted” primary RTI-resistance mutations, K103N and Y181C, can persist over the years even in the absence of drug pressure and impact RTI treatment negatively, and that appearing patterns of RTI-resistance mutations among non-subtype B HIV-1-infected children could possibly be different from those reported in subtype B-infected children. *J. Med. Virol.* 79:865–872, 2007. © 2007 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

KEY WORDS: vertical transmission; anti-HIV resistance patterns; persistence of mutations; Kenya

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of anti-retroviral drug (ARV)-resistance mutations is a major cause of anti-retroviral treatment (ART) failure [D'Aquila et al., 1995; Lorenzi et al., 1999; Zolopa et al., 1999]. These drug-resistant HIV-1 strains can be transmitted through vertical, sexual, and parenteral routes [Eric et al., 1993; Conlon et al., 1994; Boden et al., 1999; Little et al., 1999; Brenner et al., 2000; Pillay et al., 2000; Salomon et al., 2000; Duwe et al., 2001]. Vertically transmitted multi-drug resistant HIV-1 strain has been shown to persist for 9 months in an infant after postnatal therapy [Johnson et al., 2001]. Similarly, K103N-containing HIV-1 variants acquired after the administration of single dose-nevirapine, a non-nucleoside reverse-transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI), have been reported to persist for more than 1 year in some women and infants after vertical transmission [Flys et al., 2005]. However, long-term persistence of vertically

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transmitted ARV-resistance mutations in the absence of drug pressure among infants and children is yet to be demonstrated.

Recently, the importance of ARV-resistant strains detected as minor populations has been reported. Minor drug-resistant HIV-1 populations have been detected both in the early phase of treatment failure [Coffin, 1995] and during successful structured treatment interruption [Metzner et al., 2003]. Minor drug-resistant populations undetectable by conventional assays can eventually overgrow and affect the clinical course [Dykes et al., 2004; Lecossier et al., 2005]. These minor drug-resistant populations have also been found to persist longer than expected previously in untreated patients, a favorable condition for wild-type virus to overgrow, which also indicates the risk of resistance transmission even from minor strains [Charpentier et al., 2004].

In patients experiencing treatment failure with nucleoside reverse-transcriptase inhibitors (NRTI), such as lamivudine plus either zidovudine or stavudine, the M184V mutation has been reported to always appear first, eventually followed by cumulative acquisition of thymidine-analogue-associated mutations (TAMs) if treatment with non-suppressive regimen is continued [Johnson et al., 2005]. Extensive studies on ARV-resistance suggest that HIV-1 may develop TAMs by either one of two distinct pathways; TAM 1 (M41L, L210W, and T215Y) or TAM 2 (D67N, K70R, and K219Q/E/N/R) [Flandre et al., 2003; Cozzi-Lepri et al., 2005]. However, most of these studies have focused on HIV-1 subtype B, which accounts for only 12% of the global HIV/AIDS pandemic, and data on non-subtype B HIV-1 is still limited. Furthermore, several differences in the development of ARV-resistance between subtype B and non-subtype B HIV-1 have been suggested [Apetrei et al., 1998; Quinones-Mateu et al., 1998; Pieniazek et al., 2000]. Most ARV-resistance studies have focused on adult populations [Yerly et al., 1998; de Ronde et al., 2001; Dykes et al., 2001; Brenner et al., 2002; Wainberg, 2003]. However, these findings may not be applicable directly to children, since several factors influencing selection of ARV-resistance such as pharmacokinetic properties; drug safety, tolerance, and antiviral activity of combination therapy, are usually different in the children [Kline et al., 1996].

The aim of this study was to investigate the patterns of emergence and the variable stability of ARV-resistance-associated mutations among non-subtype B HIV-1 vertically-infected children who developed eventually clinical failure with subsequent ART.

METHODS

Study Population

The subjects in this study resided in children's home in Nairobi, which housed 95 HIV-1-infected children. These children were born to HIV-1-infected mothers who either died of, or were too debilitated by HIV/AIDS hence could not offer basic care to the children. Of 95

children 55 were on ART as of August 2004. The duration of ART varied among children (mean: 23.3 months, range: 5–46 months). Of 55 children on ART 12 (8 males and 4 females, mean age: 7.4 years) experienced treatment failure, characterized by an initial decrease in plasma viral load (to undetectable level in one child) after treatment initiation and subsequent increase in the viral load as treatment continued. Seven of the 12 children received single ART regimen only during the study period: 5 received zidovudine/lamivudine/nevirapine, 1 zidovudine/didanosine/efavirenz, and 1 zidovudine/lamivudine/efavirenz (Table I). On the other hand, the remaining five children received multiple ART regimen during the study period: two received zidovudine/lamivudine/efavirenz followed by zidovudine/didanosine/efavirenz, two zidovudine/lamivudine/nevirapine followed by didanosine/lamivudine/efavirenz, and one didanosine/lamivudine/abacavir followed by zidovudine/didanosine/efavirenz and later didanosine/stavudine/efavirenz (Table I). These 12 children were admitted into the home by their first birthday and their HIV-1 status was confirmed serologically at 18 months of age. None of these children had history of previous exposure to any ARV.

This study was approved by the Kenya Medical Research Institute's National Ethical Review Committee on behalf of the Kenyan Government and conducted according to the national and international regulations governing the use of human subjects in biomedical research. The study was conducted within the continuing anti-retroviral, medical and healthcare programs of the institution without additional demand for blood samples solely for research purposes.

CD4⁺ Cell Counts and Plasma Viral Loads

CD4⁺ T cell counts of peripheral blood were determined using the FACSCOUNT (Becton-Dickinson, Beiersdorf, Germany) and plasma HIV-1 RNA loads using the Amplicor HIV-1 Monitor kit version 1.5 (Roche Diagnostics, Alameda, CA) with detection limit of 400 copies/ml according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Extraction and Amplification of Plasma HIV-1 Viral RNA

HIV-1 RNA was extracted from 100 µl of plasma using SMITEST EX-R and D (Sumitomo Metal Industries, Tokyo, Japan) according to the manufacturer's instructions. A region of the *pol-RT* gene (corresponding to nt 2480–3180 of HIV-1_{HXB2}) was amplified by both one-step RT-PCR (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA) and nested PCR with primer pairs, RT18 (5'-GGAAACCAAAAATGATAGGGGGAATTGGAGG-3') and KS104 (5'-TGAC-TTGCCCAATTTAGTTTTCCCACTAA-3') in the first round, and KS101 (5'-GTAGGACCTACACCTGTTC-AACATAATTGGAAG-3') and KS102 (5'-CCCATCCAAAGAAATGGAGGAGGTTCTTTCTGATG-3') in the second round [Ndemi et al., 2004; Songok et al.,

TABLE I. General Characteristics of Non-B Subtype HIV-1-Infected Study Children

Sample ID	Age* (years)/sex	HIV-1 subtype/CRF	Study point (month, year)	ART ^a (initiation time)	CD4 ⁺ T cell count (/µl)	Plasma viral load (copies/ml)	NRTI ^b -resistance mutations	NNRTI ^c -resistance mutations
NYU30	11/F	A1	Jul '02 Mar '03 Jan '04	ZDV, 3TC, EFV (Jun '01) ZDV, DDI, EFV (May '03)	456 475 267	<400 24,857 89,063	D67N + K70R + K219Q	L100I
NYU33	11/F	A1	Jul '02 Mar '03 Feb '04	ZDV, 3TC, EFV (Jun '01) ZDV, DDI, EFV (Oct 01)	549 556 690	3,449 122,419 6,457	K219Q K219Q + D218E	K101Q K101Q
NYU36	11/M	D	Oct '01 May '02 Aug '02 Apr '03 Feb '04	ddI, 3TC, ABC (Apr '01) ZDV, DDI, EFV (Oct 01) D4T, DDI, EFV (Nov 02)	309 321 279 458	114,754 880,405 81,870 607,224 393,420	M184V + T215F M184V + T215F M184V + T215F T215F T215F	I178M G190A G190A G190A
NYU38	10/M	C	Mar '03 Dec '03	ZDV, 3TC, NVP (Sep '02)	388 188	38,459 60,695	D67N + K70R + L210W + K219E	
			Feb '04	DDI, 3TC, EFV (Mar 04)	157	38,211	D67N + K70R + L210W + K219E	
			Aug '04		149		D67N + K70R + L210W + D218E + K219E	
NYU44	9/M	A1	Feb '02 Mar '03 Dec '03	ZDV, DDI, EFV (May '02)	208 370 474	1,017,931 71,895 150,549	D67N + K70R + T215F + K219Q D67N + K70R + T215F + K219Q + M41L + V75M	K103N K103N + G190A K103N + G190A
NYU62	8/M	A1	Dec '01 Sep '02 Mar '03 May '04	ZDV, 3TC, NVP (Sep '02)	589 828 568	239,644 2,838	D67N + K70R + T215F + K219E D67N + K70R + T215F + K219E	G190A G190A G190A + Y181C
NYU69	6/M	A1	Mar '03 May '04	ZDV, 3TC, NVP (Mar '03)	192 400	227,176 113,868	M184V	K103N K103N
NYU70	7/M	D	Sep '02 Jun '03 Dec '03	ZDV, 3TC, NVP (Jul '03)	718 169 502	700,563 1,323,431 188,059	K70R + M184V	K103N K103N K103N
NYU79	6/M	A1	Feb '03 Feb '04 Jun '04	ZDV, 3TC, NVP (Apr '03) Ddl, 3TC, EFV (Mar 04)	70 551 347	159,826 244,506 472,203	V75M + M184V V75M + M184V	K101E + G190A K101E + G190A + Y181C
NYU83	5/M	A1	May '01 Jul '02 Apr '03 Aug '04	ZDV, 3TC, EFV (May '04)	876 946 1138 1125	634,644 50,570 74,437 197,301	M184V M184V M184V + T215Y	K103N K103N K103N
NYU85	5/F	CRF02_AG	Feb '03 Dec '03 Apr '04	ZDV, 3TC, NVP (Apr '03)	178 1214 1148	30,690 3,264 79,080	D67N + M184V D67N + M184V	K103N K103N
NYU90	2/F	D	Apr '03 Jan '04 Mar '04	ZDV, 3TC, NVP (Apr '03)	6 399 379	523,950 55,679 155,191	M184V	Y181C K103N

*As of August 2004.
^aART, anti-retroviral therapy; ZDV, zidovudine; ddI, didanosine; EFV, efavirenz; NVP, nevirapine; 3TC, lamivudine; d4T, Stavudine.
^bNRTI, nucleoside analogue RTI.
^cNNRTI, non-nucleoside RTI; blank, no mutation detected.

2004]. Amplification was done with 1 cycle of 95°C for 10 min and 35 cycles of 95°C for 30 sec, 55°C for 30 sec, and 72°C for 1 min, with a final extension of 72°C for 10 min. PCR amplification was confirmed by ethidium bromide staining of samples electrophoresed on an agarose gel.

Cloning, Sequencing, and Subtyping

The amplified products were cloned using the TOPO TA Cloning kit (Invitrogen) and sequenced as described previously [Ndemi et al., 2004; Songok et al., 2004]. The sample nucleotide sequences were aligned with HIV-1 subtype reference sequences from the Los Alamos database by CLUSTALW (version 1.81) with minor manual adjustments. Phylogenetic trees were constructed and visualized as described previously [Ndemi et al., 2004; Songok et al., 2004]. To improve the accuracy of HIV-1 subtyping, we used the genotyping tool (<http://www.ncbi.nih.gov/projects/genotyping/formpage.cgi>), and the REGA subtyping tool (<http://dbpartners.stanford.edu/RegaSubtyping/>) as needed.

RTI Resistance-Associated Mutations

The RT nucleotide sequences (697 bps) were translated into the corresponding 232 amino acids and analyzed for previously reported drug resistance-associated mutations in subtype B strains using the Stanford university HIVdb sequence analysis program. For each sample, at least five clones were obtained and genotyped to detect the presence of minor populations.

RESULTS

General characteristics, treatment history, demographic, immunological, and virological data of the 12 HIV-1-infected children studied are summarized in Table I.

HIV-1 Subtypes

All children were infected with non-subtype B HIV-1: subtype A1 (n = 7), subtype C (n = 1), subtype D (n = 3), and circulating recombinant form (CRF)-02_AG (n = 1) (Table I).

RTI Resistance-Associated Mutations Before Treatment

Of the 12 children, 4 (33.3%) harbored NNRTI-resistance mutations before treatment. Three children, NYU44 (age, 7 years), NYU69 (5 years), and NYU70 (6 years), had K103N while NYU90 (1 year) had Y181C detected before treatment (Table I). All the mutations but one (one of seven clones in NYU69) were detected as full clones (Table IV). K103N detected in three children persisted, while Y181C detected in one child disappeared during treatment.

Emerging Pattern of NRTI Resistance-Associated Mutations

The patterns of NRTI-resistance mutations are summarized in Table II. M184V appeared as the first

TABLE II. Patterns of NRTI*-Resistance Mutations in Non-B Subtype HIV-1-Infected Children With Treatment

Child (ID)	Study point (mpti ^a)					Treatment
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
NYU69	M184V (10)					ZDV/3TC
NYU90	M184V (9)					ZDV/3TC
NYU83	M184V (13)		M184V + 1TAM ^b (38)			ZDV/3TC
NYU70	M184V + 1TAM (6)					ZDV/3TC
NYU85	M184V + 1TAM (9)	M184V + 1TAM (12)				ZDV/3TC
NYU36	M184V + 1TAM (6)	M184V + 1TAM (13)		1 TAM (24)	1 TAM (34)	DDI/3TC/ABC, ZDV/DDI, D4T/DDI
NYU62	2 TAMs (6)	4 TAMs (12)	4 TAMs (22)			ZDV/3TC
NYU44	4 TAMs (11)	5 TAMs + V75M (19)				ZDV/3TC
NYU33		1 TAM (23)				ZDV/DDI
NYU30		4 TAMs (15)	2 TAMs (34)			ZDV/3TC, ZDV/DDI
NYU38		M184V + V75M (13)	3 TAMs (31)			ZDV/DDI
NYU79			4 TAMs (17)	5 TAMs (23)		ZDV/3TC, DDI/3TC

*NRTI, nucleoside analogue RTI.

^ampti, months post treatment initiation.

^bTAM, thymidine analogue-associated resistance mutation; blank, no mutation detected.

Drug Resistance in Non-B HIV-1 Infected Children

primary NRTI-resistance mutation in 3 of 12 children (NYU69, NYU90, and NYU83), (later followed by the acquisition of one TAM in NYU83), while M184V appeared as first primary NRTI-resistance mutation with one TAM in three children (NYU36, NYU70, and NYU85) who received zidovudine/lamivudine, zidovudine/didanosine, or lamivudine/didanosine. The remaining five children (NYU30, NYU33, NYU38, NYU44, and NYU62) had a mixture of TAMs appearing as first mutations. Three of them (NYU44, NYU62, and NYU38) had both TAM 1 (M41L, L210W, and T215Y) and TAM 2 (D67N, K70R, and K219Q) profiles detected together. M184V appeared as the first primary NRTI-resistance mutation together with V75M in child NYU79. NYU33 developed K219Q only, a "secondary" NRTI-resistance mutation.

Emerging Pattern of NNRTI Resistance-Associated Mutations

In four of the five children who received nevirapine (NYU69, NYU70, NYU85, NYU90) K103N appeared as the first primary NNRTI-resistance mutation, while in one (NYU62) G190A appeared as the first mutation (Table III). In two of the five children who received efavirenz (NYU44 and NYU 83) K103N appeared as the first NNRTI-resistance mutation, while in two children (NYU30 and NYU33) L100I and K101Q, respectively, appeared as the first NNRTI-resistance mutation. One child (NYU36) who received didanosine/lamivudine/abacavir with subsequent change to an efavirenz-containing regimen developed I178M as the first NNRTI-resistance mutation, which was replaced later by appearance of G190A.

One child (NYU79) developed K101E and G190A as first NNRTI-resistance mutations with nevirapine therapy and developed additionally Y181C when ART was changed to efavirenz-containing regimen during the study period.

In the remaining one child (NYU38) no known NNRTI-resistance mutation was detected despite receiving nevirapine—and later efavirenz-containing regimen (Table III).

Growth of Minor Mutant Virus Population into Major One

Five of 12 children had RTI-resistance mutations detected as minor virus populations, which subsequently grew into full clones (Table IV). In the remaining seven children no RTI-resistant mutation was detected as a minor population (data not shown).

RTI-resistance mutations, such as T215F in child NYU36, T215F in NYU44, D67N/K70R/T215F in NYU62, and K101Q/K219Q in NYU33, appeared as minor populations after initiation of treatment, which overgrew subsequently to major populations.

In one child (NYU69), K103N was found as a minor population (1/5 clones) before initiation of treatment and became major population (7/7 clones) 8 months after treatment.

TABLE III. Patterns of NNRTI^a-Resistance Mutations Among Non-B Subtype HIV-1-Infected Children With Treatment

Child (ID)	Study point (mpti ^a)						Treatment
	Pre-treatment	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
NYU69	K103N (-4)	K103N (10)					NEVIRAPINE
NYU70	K103N (-10, -1)	K103N (11)					
NYU85		K103N (9)					
NYU62		G190A (6)	K103N (12)				
NYU90	Y181C (-0.25)		G190A (12)				
NYU38			K103N (11)				
NYU83			K103N (22)				
NYU30							
NYU44			K103N+G190A (18)				
NYU33	K103N (-3)	K103N + G190A (10)	K101Q (11)				
NYU36			I178M (13)				
NYU79			K101E + G190A + Y181C (14)				
NYU38							EFAVIRENZ
					G190A (24)	G190A (34)	

NNRTI: non-nucleoside analogue RTI.
^ampti, months post treatment initiation; blank, no mutation detected.

TABLE IV. Evolution of Minor RTI-Resistance Mutant Populations Among Non-B HIV-1-Infected Children With Treatment

Child ID	Study point (months post-treatment)	ART ^a	Plasma viral load (copies/ml)	NRTI ^b -resistance mutations	NNRTI ^c -resistance mutations
NYU36	1st (6)		114,754	T215F (1/9)^d + M184V (6/8)	
	2nd (13)	DDI, 3TC, ABC	880,405	T215F (1/8) + M184V (2/8)	I178M (6/8)
	3rd (18)	ZDV, DDI, EFV	81,870	T215F (9/9) + M184V (8/9)	G190A (8/9)
	4th (24)		607,224	T215F (5/5)	G190A (5/5)
	5th (34)	D4T, DDI, EFV	393,420	T215F (7/7)	G190A (7/7)
NYU44	Pre-treatment		1,017,931		K103N (5/5)
	1st (10)	ZDV, DDI, EFV	71,895	D67N (5/5) + K70R (5/5) + T215F (1/5) + K219Q (5/5)	K103N (5/5) + G190A (5/5)
NYU62	2nd (17)		150,549	D67N (5/5) + K70R (5/5) + T215F (5/5) + K219Q (5/5) + M41L (1/5) + V75M (3/5)	K103N (5/5) + G190A (5/5)
	Pre-treatment		239,644		G190A (5/5)
NYU69	1st (6)	ZDV, 3TC, NVP	2,838	D67N (1/5) + K70R (1/5)	G190A (5/5)
	2nd (12)			D67N (5/5) + K70R (5/5) + T215F (2/5) + K219E (5/5)	G190A (5/5)
	3rd (26)		6,901	D67N (5/5) + K70R (5/5) + T215F (2/5) + K219E (5/5)	Y181C (4/5) + G190A (5/5)
NYU33	Pre-treatment		227,176		K103N (1/5)
	1st (10)	ZDV, 3TC, NVP	113,868	M184V (7/7)	K103N (7/7)
	1st (15)		3,449		
NYU33	2nd (23)	ZDV, 3TC, EFV	122,419	K219Q (4/11)	K101Q (6/11)
	3rd (34)	ZDV, DDI, EFV	6,457	K219Q (14/14) + D218E (14/14)	K101Q (14/14)

^aART, anti-retroviral therapy; ZDV, zidovudine; ddI, didanosine; EFV, efavirenz; NVP, nevirapine; 3TC, lamivudine; d4T, Stavudine.

^bNRTI, nucleoside analogue RTI.

^cNNRTI: non-nucleoside RTI, blank: no mutation detected.

^dNumber of clones with mutation/total number of clones analysed; bold, minor RTI-resistant mutant populations that evolved.

DISCUSSION

In the current study, NNRTI resistance-associated primary mutations, K103N and Y181C, were found before ART in four (33.3%) of 12 HIV-1-vertically-infected Kenyan children with subsequent ART failure. Three children aged 5–7 years already had K103N mutation, while one child aged 1 year already had Y181C by the time ART was started. These children had no history of previous exposure to any ART or blood transfusion, suggesting that these drug-resistance mutations were transmitted vertically from their mothers. However, ART history of these children's mothers could not be confirmed, and the use of nevirapine to reduce transmission of HIV-1 from mother to child had not been started by the year 2002 in Kenya [NASCOP, 2002].

This is the first report on the long-term persistence of NNRTI-resistance mutation for upto 7 years in vertically HIV-1-infected children albeit in the absence of ART. The K103N mutation has been reported to have little impact on the replicative capacity of HIV-1, allowing K103N variants to persist as dominant species at the expense of the wild strains [Brenner et al., 2002]. Thus, these current findings emphasize the need for drug-resistance testing among HIV-1-infected children prior to starting any NNRTI-containing regimen to avoid earlier treatment failure.

The selection of some ARV-resistance mutations among minor HIV-1 populations after ART initiation has been reported previously [Coffin, 1995; Metzner et al., 2003; Charpentier et al., 2004; Dykes et al., 2004; Lecossier et al., 2005]. In this study, RTI-resistance mutations detected in five children as minor populations after ART initiation subsequently grew into major populations, resulting in ART failure. In addition, it is noted that a primary NNRTI-resistance mutation, K103N, was found in one of five HIV-1 clones from a drug-naïve Kenyan child (NYU69), and this minor drug-resistant virus became dominant (seven of seven clones) after 8-months ART, resulting in treatment failure. These findings indicate that minor ARV-resistant HIV-1 variants existing before therapy can also be an important cause of treatment failure, as suggested previously [Dykes et al., 2004; Lecossier et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2006]. Standard genotyping methods can only detect more than 25% of the virus variants [Gunthard et al., 1998]. Therefore, in order to pick minor variant populations and pre-empt treatment failure, more sensitive detection methods for minor HIV-1 populations would be required [Edelstein et al., 1998; Gunthard et al., 1998; Grant et al., 2002; Schuurman et al., 2002; Malet et al., 2003; Shi et al., 2004; Palmer et al., 2005].

Results from this study suggest the possible existence of two different patterns of emergence or acquisition of the TAMs among children who receive thymidine-analogues such as zidovudine, lamivudine, and/or stavudine. Seven of the 12 children had an initial development of M184V mutation, followed by the cumulative acquisition of TAMs, consistent with previous studies of subtype

B HIV-1 [Johnson et al., 2005], which reported that TAMs always develop by either one of two distinct pathways, TAM1 (M41L, L210W, and T215Y) or TAM 2 (D67N, K70R, and K219Q/E/R), under the pressure of thymidine analogue-containing ARVs. The remaining five children, however, developed TAMs only without the initial appearance of M184V mutation. Additionally, three of these children developed both TAMs 1 and 2 members concurrently, discordant with previous reports [Flandre et al., 2003; Cozzi-Lepri et al., 2005]. One child (NYU33) developed K219Q and K101Q mutations only, after 2-year treatment with zidovudine, didanosine, and efavirenz. These two mutations have been previously grouped among the secondary RTI-resistance-associated mutations, unable to cause drug-resistance in the absence of other primary RTI-resistance-associated mutations such as K70R or T215F [Garcia-Lerma, 2005]. These findings therefore suggest the possible existence of different pathways for development of RTI-resistance in non-subtype B HIV-1-infected children, different from those reported in subtype B-infected individuals, and that secondary RTI-resistance-associated mutations namely K219Q and K101Q could independently cause ART resistance among non-subtype B HIV-1-infected children. Further studies are however needed in order to confirm these findings.

The K103N mutation has been reported as the most commonly selected NNRTI-resistance-associated mutation, usually appearing first [Johnson et al., 2005]. The results from the children who received nevirapine in this study agree with this observation. However, the children who received efavirenz developed a variety of NNRTI-resistance-associated mutations, such as L100I, K101Q, I178M, and G190A. This is the first report to show the possibility of the K101Q and I178M to appear as the first NNRTI-resistance mutations with efavirenz therapy. L100I, Y181C, and G190A have already been described [Johnson et al., 2005]. In addition, one child (NYU38) who received nevirapine and later efavirenz containing regimen did not have any NNRTI-resistance-associated mutation despite experiencing treatment failure, suggesting a possible difference in the initial selection of NNRTI-resistant mutations between non-subtype B and subtype B HIV-1-infected children. However, considering recent reports on the association between a homozygous variant of multidrug-resistance transporter *C3435T* and good immune recovery [Saitoh et al., 2005], and the correlation of homozygous *CYP2B6* *6 with plasma efavirenz concentrations in HIV-1-infected individuals treated with efavirenz-containing regimen [Tsuchiya et al., 2004], further pharmacogenetic studies would also be needed to elucidate these phenomenon.

In conclusion, this study suggests a possible long-term persistence of "vertically transmitted" NNRTI-resistance mutations in the absence of drug pressure, that minor populations of RTI-resistant HIV-1 mutants may impact negatively on the outcome of ART, and that there is a possible difference in the pattern of appearance and profile of RTI-resistance mutations between non-

subtype B and subtype B HIV-1-infected children. Further studies with large population size are needed to confirm these findings.

SEQUENCE DATA

GenBank accession numbers of the sequences reported in this study are DQ679541 to DQ679753 for *Pol-RT*.

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Feature Article

Nutritional status of low-birthweight ethnic minority infants in Backan province, Vietnam

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Abstract

Background: Birthweight and length have been reported to be important determinants of infant growth and future nutritional status. The study aims to describe the weight and length growth patterns during the first year of life of low-birthweight (LBW) ethnic minority infants in the mountainous province Backan, Vietnam.

Methods: A total of 64 LBW and normal birthweight infants of ethnic minority mothers were recruited from 2001 to 2002 into a prospective cohort study. The weight and length of infants were measured monthly for 1 year. Data on nutritional status and feeding practices of the infants were collected from monthly health records and face-to-face interviews with mothers while their infants were 6 and 12 months of age.

Results: Most of the increase in weight, length and catch-up to the 10th percentile for LBW infants occurred during the first 3 and 6 months for boys and for girls, respectively. After these ages, the mean weight and length diverged from National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reference curves to below the 10th percentile. LBW infants' weight-for-age z-scores was below the NCHS standard at birth (-2.16 SD), caught up after birth, became sustainable by 4 months, fell rapidly from the sixth month, then decreased to -2 SD at 12 months of age. LBW infants' length-for-age z-scores increased in the first month after birth, decreased in the second month and sharply increased again until 5 months of age before decreasing.

Conclusions: For LBW infants, it is difficult to achieve the same weight or length curves at 12 months of age as the NCHS standard.

Key words

ethnic minority, low birthweight, nutritional status, Vietnam.

Weight and length at birth have been reported to be important determinants of infant growth¹ and future nutritional status.² The first year of life is characterized by extremely rapid growth and most growth faltering, resulting in underweight and stunting, occurs within a relatively short period from before birth until about 2 years of age. A low-birthweight (LBW) infant is more likely to be underweight or stunted in early life.³ These infants are known to be at risk of long-term growth deficits with little chance of fully catching up.⁴ Furthermore, infants born with LBW suffer from extremely high rates of morbidity and mortality from infectious disease and are underweight, stunted or wasted beginning in the neonatal period through childhood. It has been estimated that for term infants weighing 2000–2500 g at birth, the risk of neonatal death is 10 times higher than for infants weighing 3000–3500 g.⁵

Many studies have sought to answer the question whether LBW infants have normal growth status compared with normal birthweight (NBW) and international standard growth recommended by the National Center for Health Statistics ([NCHS]/World Health Organization). Most studies have focused on very LBW⁶ or LBW preterm infants.⁷ A full understanding of the correlation between birthweight and nutritional status of LBW at term infants during the first year of age is, therefore, necessary for developing nutrition intervention strategies in early childhood.

In Vietnam, LBW and malnutrition are considered major public health problems, as the prevalence is 7.3 and 33.8%, respectively.⁸ The actual LBW figure may be higher, because in some communities only a small proportion of infants are born in a health-care facility where birthweight can be measured.

Since no specific studies about nutritional growth of LBW infants during the first year of life have been conducted in Backan, this paper is to describe the weight and length growth patterns during the first year of life of LBW at term ethnic minority infants compared with NCHS/WHO standard growth

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curves; and to evaluate the nutritional status of LBW at term infants in the first year of life.

Methods

Sample and data collection

A prospective cohort study was conducted in Backan, a mountainous province in the north of Vietnam, about 160 km from the capital, Hanoi. Its population is 280 697, and 80% inhabitants belong to ethnic minority groups. A total of 35% of children under 5 years of age suffer from malnutrition, and 8% of infants are born with a birthweight less than 2500 g.⁹

Study infants were recruited from 20 health centers and the provincial hospital over a 1-year period from August 2001 to July 2002. The research sample consisted of 32 ethnic minority mothers of LBW infants and 32 control mothers who had a NBW infant. Each mother of a LBW infant was matched by age and infant's gender to the next eligible mother with a NBW infant. Criteria for sample selection were: singleton birth at term (gestational age ≥ 37 weeks), no congenital anomaly, and weight at birth 1500–2499 g for the LBW and 3000–3500 g for the NBW infant group.

The infants of the mothers who were agreed to enter the study were followed up from August 2001 to July 2003. Infants' weights and lengths were measured at birth and about every 30 days from birth to 12 months of age. Other information, such as duration of exclusive breastfeeding and feeding patterns, as well as infant morbidity, was based on a monthly child health self record and questionnaire interview at 6 and 12 months of age for mothers.

Anthropometry

The weight and length of infants were measured monthly at time of birth to 12 months of corrected age by trained health workers at health centers, during home visits at birth and subsequently. Infants with light clothing were weighed to the nearest 10 g with a portable infant scale and the supine length was measured to the nearest 0.1 cm using a wooden length board.¹⁰ These measurement tools were recommended by the Vietnamese National Malnutrition Prevention program. Infant weights and lengths were converted into a weight-for-age z-score (WAZ) and a length-for-age z-score (LAZ) using median values from the NCHS as the reference.¹¹

Data analysis

Infants were excluded from the study if they were twin births or had any congenital anomalies likely to affect birthweight

and subsequent growth. Infants were also excluded if their gestational age at birth was less than 37 weeks. Only data of infants whose growth data during the first year of life were complete were used for analysis in the study.

LBW at term infants were defined as infants whose gestational age was ≥ 37 weeks and whose weight at birth was < 2500 g. Weight and length gains were used as indicators to assess the infant's physical growth. Weight/length gain in relation to birthweight/length was defined as differences between the measurement at the 12th month minus the measurement at birth and divided by the weight/length at birth.¹² Weight and length-for-age z-scores at 12 months of age compared with at birth were used to evaluate infants' improvement and catch-up. Z-score catch-up was defined as change above -2 SD (22 catch-up growth). Stunting was defined as a LAZ score of less than -2 SD; underweight as WAZ score of less than -2 SD on the basis of NCHS/WHO reference data.

All the data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 10.0) program for Windows. Standardized LAZ score and WAZ score were calculated with the EPINUT program in Epi-Infor version 2000. Bodyweights and lengths at different ages were compared with the NCHS reference growth curves with 10th and 90th percentiles. Growth measurements of term infants by gender taken from the NCHS population were used for comparison. An independent Student's *t*-test was used to test for the differences in weight and length gain between the two groups. A paired samples *t*-test was used to compare means of z-scores at birth and at 12 months of age. A *P*-value of less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$) was adopted as the criterion of significance.

Results

Characteristics of study sample

The characteristics of the study sample are presented in Table 1. During 1 year, from August 2001 to July 2002, 64 infants were recruited into the study. All those mothers were ethnic minority farming women and the average age was approximately 23.8 ± 4.2 years and schooling was 7.6 ± 2.1 years. The range of birthweights was 2200–3500 g, with a mean of 2762 ± 498 g.

Among these eligible subjects, a final sample of 20 ethnic minority LBW infants and 31 control NBW infants completed the 12-month follow-up period. Of those who dropped out, 12 LBW and one NBW infants did not complete the 1-year follow up due to neonatal death or emigration from the research areas. In total, 51 infants were monitored at gestational age around 39 weeks, with a mean birthweight of 2264 ± 173 g in the study cases and 3226 ± 182 g in the control group. Length at birth was 45.8 ± 1.2 and 49.0 ± 1.2 cm for LBW and NBW infants, respectively.

Table 1 Characteristic of study sample

	LBW (n=20)	NBW (n=31)	P [†]
Weight at birth (g)	2264±174	3226±183	<0.001
Length at birth (cm)	45.8±1.2	49.0±1.2	<0.001
Gestational age (weeks)	39.4±3.0	39.5±1.9	0.81
Exclusively breast-fed (months)	3.05±0.76	3.32±0.7	0.19

[†]Student's *t*-test.

LBW, low birthweight; NBW, normal birthweight.

Weight gain

The mean birthweight was 2264±173 g in the study cases and 3226±182 g in the control group. The differences in weight indicators continued to be significant at 1 year of age with 7585 and 8869 g for LBW and NBW infants, respectively. At 12 months of age, bodyweight was 3.3 and 2.7 times weight at birth for LBW and NBW infant groups, respectively (Table 2).

Mean weight gain at 1 and 12 months of age was 133 and 321 g, respectively, higher in NBW than in LBW infants ($P<0.001$). In contrast, higher weight gain relative to birthweight was observed in LBW than in NBW infants. At 1 month of age, the difference was 8.6% ($P=0.03$) and this increased to 61.6% ($P<0.001$) at 12 months of age. Weight gain relative to birthweight at 12 months was significantly higher in LBW than in NBW infants ($P<0.001$). The mean postnatal weight gains for LBW and NBW are shown in (Table 3).

Figure 1a,b show the observed mean weights of LBW and NBW study infants by gender as they appear on standard NCHS growth curves. During the first year of age, the mean weight of both boys and girls with LBW was at the lower median level of NCHS reference growth curves. Most of the increase in weight and catch-up to the 10th percentile of LBW infants occurred during the first 3 months for boys and during the first 6 months for girls. After these ages, the mean weight diverged from the NCHS reference curves to below the 10th percentile.

Table 2 Mean weight and length at 1 and 12 months of age

	LBW (n=20)	NBW (n=31)	P [†]
At birth			
Weight (g)	2264±174	3226±183	<0.001
Length (cm)	45.8±1.2	49.0±1.2	<0.001
At 1 month			
Weight (g)	3258±523	4354±382	<0.001
Length (cm)	49.6±1.9	53.6±1.8	<0.001
At 12 months			
Weight (g)	7585±808	8869±1025	<0.001
Length (cm)	69.9±4.2	73.7±3.7	0.001

[†]Student's *t*-test.

LBW, low birthweight; NBW, normal birthweight.

Table 3 Weight gain of study infants

	LBW (n=20)	NBW (n=31)	P [†]
At 1 month (g)	995±431	1128±317	0.20
At 12 month (g)	5322±786	5643±947	0.21
Relative to birthweight at 1 month (%)	43.6±18.5	35.0±9.9	0.03
Relative to birthweight at 12 months (%)	236.5±39.4	174.9±27.6	<0.001

[†]Student's *t*-test.

LBW, low birthweight; NBW, normal birthweight.

The boys approached the 50th percentile at 3 months of corrected age and tended to decrease, whereas the girls grew along the 10th percentile between 1 and 7 months of corrected age.

The weights of the NBW infants in the first 6 months appeared normally distributed, and started to falter between the 50th and the 10th percentiles afterward.

Length gain

Length at birth was 45.8±1.2 cm for LBW and 49.0±1.2 cm for NBW infants. NBW infants achieved greater increases in length than LBW infants at 1 month (0.8 cm, $P=0.11$) and 12 months after birth (0.5 cm, $P=0.66$). Length gain relative to length at birth was 1% ($P=0.32$) higher at 1 month of age in NBW than in LBW infants. However, at 12 months of age, length relative to length at birth was 2.6% ($P=0.26$) lower in NBW infants than in LBW infants. Despite differences in length gain at 1 and 12 months of age between the two groups, neither the length-gain nor the length-gain relative to size-at-birth differences were statistically significant. Detail of length gains are displayed in Table 4.

Figure 2a,b present the growth curves of length for age of LBW and NBW infants by gender compared to the NCHS standard. For both boys and girls with NBW, their length for age from birth to 12 months of age run parallel to the NCHS median growth curve. The girls' growth curve in the LBW infants group grew along the 10th percentile curve, the boys' growth curve was parallel to and below the 10th percentile of the standard NCHS reference curve.

Nutritional status

The mean WAZ during the first year for LBW and NBW infant groups is shown in Figure 3. The trend of mean WAZ was the same in both groups during the first 12 months of age, but at a higher level in NBW infants. From birth to about 4 months, the study infants showed substantial improvement in mean WAZ