

Long-Acting Therapy: what PLWHIV think about it

Reference authors: Mattioli Sandro¹, Del Negro Leonardo², Cecere Salvatore¹, Leserri Filippo²

- 1. Plus – Persone LGBT+ Sieropositive - aps
- 2. Plus Roma aps

Introduction/Summary

In May 2022 ^[1], the two long-acting injectable antiretroviral drugs against HIV were approved in Italy. For PLWH the expectation on this new therapy was very high. This survey is a first analysis of patients' point of view.

The investigation attracted the unwelcome attention of anti-vaccinationists who disrupted the data collection.

Study Design

From December 15, 2023 to January 31, 2024, we conducted an online sponsored national survey on Facebook. Later on we also published our survey on Twitter, Instagram and so on.

Our aim was to investigate the patients' point of view, whether expectations have been met and if problems had arisen in the PLWH' real lives.

Demographic data

- We collected 134 valid questionnaires
- 94.7% (127) of the sample are men, 3% are women
- Median age is 46 years (21/77)
- 85% (114) of the sample are gay, 7.5% (10) bi, 6.7% (9) heterosexuals.
- 63.4% (85) live in North of Italy, 23.13% (31) in the Centre, 13.4% (18) in the South and Main Island.

Results

Year of diagnosis

- before 1996 7.4% (10)
- 1997-2006 14% (19)
- 2007-2016 44.8% (60)
- 2017-2023 33.6% (45)

Switch's causes

In 63.4% (85) of cases the doctor asked the patient to switch to the new regimen, in 36.6% (49) of cases the patient asked.

- 49.4% (84) of the sample switched because of the duration (2 months of coverage)
- 36.5% (62) swallowing pills every day reminds them of HIV infection
- 8, 2% (14) due to toxicity of previous therapy
- 5.9% (19) due to adherence problems.

Side effects

- 49% (92) of the sample reported pain in the injection area
- 17% (32) no side effects
- 13% (25) asthenia
- 8% (15) weight gain
- 7% (13) pyrexia
- 5.8% (11) headache.

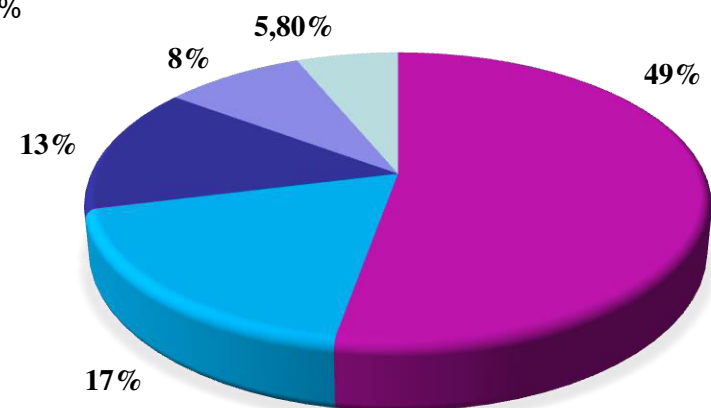
73.7% (98) feel good with LA therapy, 19% (25) are still evaluating, 7.5% (10) feel bad.

Results of 2

Clinical management

- 81.7% of respondents report having no problems with the clinical management of LA therapy
- 10.22% report the unavailability of the clinical center to reschedule appointments
- 1.46% (2) report difficulties in keeping appointments.

Side Effects



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- No side effects
- Asthenia
- Weight gain
- Headache

Conclusion

Our survey aimed to evaluate the opinion of patients on ARV Long-Acting therapy.

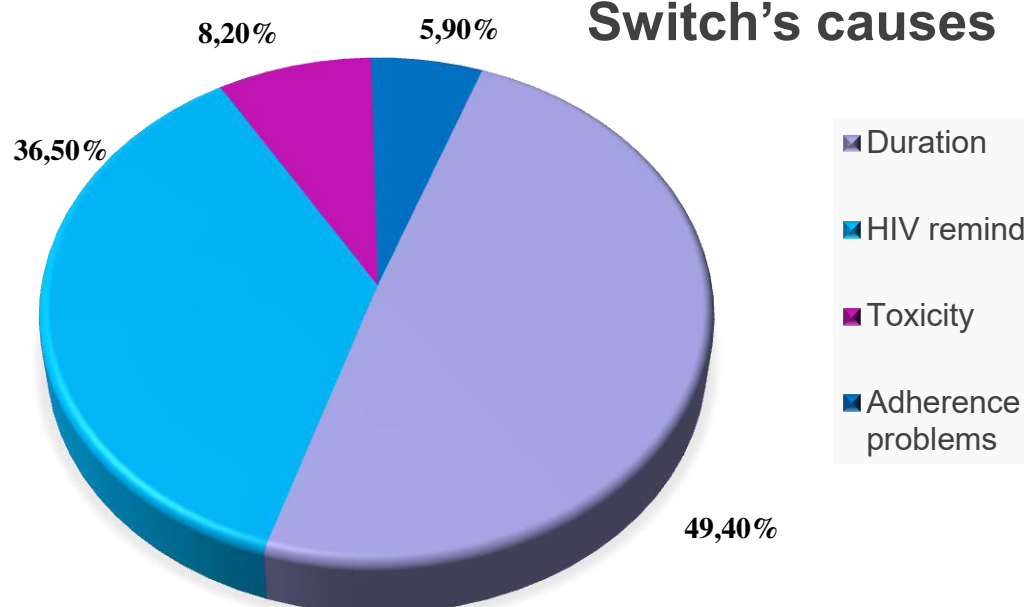
The majority of the sample confirms the positive evaluation of a switch that seems more psychological than clinical motivations.

After over 40 years of epidemic, still today the constant presence of HIV in patients' daily life, appears to be the reason that pushed the majority of the sample to switch to the new LA therapy.

It's also interesting to note that only 5% of the sample takes LAs due to adherence problems with the previous therapy while at an international level the main researchers present long-acting treatment as a possible way to overcome difficulties in therapeutic adherence, especially in some key populations.

Lastly, we note that 10.22% of patients complain about the clinical center's lack of willingness to reschedule appointments despite just 1% of the sample admitting they're unable to be punctual. Follow-up management could have room for improvement.

Switch's causes



References

1. <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2022/05/18/22A02929/SG>