

Foreword



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Amesika Nyaku, MD MS, is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Infectious Diseases at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and a physician–scientist. She provides clinical care for people living with HIV or other infectious diseases and substance use disorders. Her research interests lie at the intersection of HIV and substance use disorders. She focuses on 1) evaluating long-acting therapeutics for HIV and opioid use disorder, 2) the implementation of integrated care models for HIV and substance use disorders to improve health outcomes, and 3) increasing the inclusion and participation of racial/ethnic minorities in clinical trials research. She is also co-director of the Northern New Jersey Medication-Assisted Treatment Center of Excellence that is tasked with assisting the state in expanding access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder through education, novel service delivery and community collaboration.

We are excited to introduce the latest edition of *touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases*. Our mission is to bring you thought-provoking interviews, reviews, editorials, case studies and original research within the realm of infectious diseases. We aspire to engage infectious disease specialists, virologists, immunologists, epidemiologists and healthcare professionals with a keen interest in the captivating field of infectious diseases through our content.

Our expert interviews aim to provide a snapshot of hot topics in medicine. Firstly, Shibani Mukerji describes a recent study investigating individuals with dementia or cognitive concerns and their risk of death from COVID-19, in addition to determinants of dementia and cognitive concerns in a subpopulation with HIV. The article also discusses implications for future clinical practice.

This is then followed by a conversation with Ohad Etzion concerning chronic hepatitis delta and the D-LIVR study (Study of the efficacy and safety of Isonafarnib/ritonavir with and without pegylated interferon-alfa-2a [D-LIVR]; ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT03719313), the results of which were presented at the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) Congress 2023, 21–24th June 2023, Vienna, Austria. We discuss the results and also the hopeful and exciting future of Isonafarnib-based treatments, which are currently under negotiation with the FDA.

Next, we focus on the ever-present subject of HIV. Patient advocate Dawn Averitt shares her personal experience from her HIV diagnosis through to her advocacy work, including starting the Well Project in 2002. She also explores the transformations in societal attitudes over the past decade and sheds light on the changing therapeutic landscape and advancements in the healthcare system since her diagnosis, while acknowledging and highlighting remaining gaps that still require attention.

The availability of antiretroviral therapy (ART) has made it possible to effectively treat and prevent HIV infection, leading to a considerable decrease in associated deaths and illnesses. Monica Gandhi discusses the first-line ART regimens currently available for treating patients with newly diagnosed HIV. She also highlights the advances in long-acting ART and the findings from phase III clinical trials.

One strategy for mitigating the HIV pandemic is the advancement of a vaccine that is safe, efficacious and economically accessible. Lawrence Corey discusses the history of HIV vaccine development, and key findings from the antibody-mediated prevention (AMP) trials. We also conducted an interview with the late Stephaun Wallace, addressing the role of vaccine development in HIV infection prevention, emphasizing the potential influence of a vaccine on vulnerable populations, and summarized recent results from the phase III MOSAICO study (A study of heterologous vaccine regimen of adenovirus serotype 26 Mosaic4 human immunodeficiency virus(Ad26.Mos4.HIV), adjuvanted clade C gp140 and Mosaic gp140 to prevent HIV-1 infection among cis-gender men and transgender individuals who have sex with cis-gender men and/or transgender individuals; ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT03964415).

We continue with the subject of HIV in two review articles. Vincenzo Spagnuolo et al. discuss the characteristics of Isonafarnib, an ART medication, and its mechanism of action, key efficacy and safety data from clinical trials, and where it sits in the management of patients with multidrug-resistant HIV infection. In a second review, Jana Dickter et al. describes strategies for the treatment of a hypothetical patient with HIV and HBV co-infection who develops diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL).

Finally, Venkatraman Rajkumar discusses the risks, diagnosis, and treatment of erythrasma, a common superficial cutaneous bacterial infection caused by *Corynebacterium minutissimum*, a condition often overlooked in clinical practice.

We conclude with a case study by Stefan Schlabe et al. describing the uncommon occurrence of reactivation of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in a Ukrainian refugee coinfecting with HIV and HCV.

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The editors of *touchREVIEWS in Infectious Diseases* would like to thank all those who contributed to the insightful and educational articles included in this edition. We want to express our gratitude to the editorial board for their valuable support and guidance. Additionally, we extend our thanks to the numerous organizations and media partners who have continuously supported us. We trust you will discover a wealth of engaging content within these articles. □