Improving adherence to antiretroviral medications using triggered cell-phone reminders with the Wisepill Device: The China Adherence through Technology Study (CATS)

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Rapid ART scale up in China

• China: relatively stable HIV epidemic
  • Roughly 780,000 PLWHA currently
  • Border epidemics still growing most rapidly

• Scale-up of ART: impressive
  • National free ART program started in 2002
  • By March 2014, 287,000 on ART

• The tools exist to eliminate HIV, but…
  • Non-adherence appears common
  • Non-adherence contributes to drug resistance
  • Ways to improve adherence urgently needed

Sources: China MoH (2012), China NCAIDS personal communication (2014)
Previous China research and electronic drug monitoring (EDM) feedback

- **Our previous work in Dali**
  - EDM-informed counseling significantly improved ART adherence and CD4 counts
  - Conclusion: EDM-guided adherence support works, but is limited – it doesn’t provide real-time behavioral feedback

- **Real-time monitoring (via Wisepill)**
  - Web-linked medication container that sends electronic signal to central server at each opening
  - Allows reminders to be sent at specific times

- **Patient experience with Wisepill**
  - Wisepill feasible/acceptable in Uganda (2010)
  - Wisepill feasible/acceptable in China (2013)
So we hypothesized...

Could *real time* reminders (via Wisepill) combined with data-informed counseling improve ART adherence?
Study objectives

**Primary Objectives**

- To generate efficacy data of real-time feedback on adherence

**Secondary Objectives**

- To generate efficacy data of real-time feedback on CD4 count, HIV viral load
CATS study design
(‘real-time feedback’ intervention)

Eligible patients → Adherence Monitoring → Intervention: Reminders & Adherence Feedback → Comparison: Usual Care PLUS (No reminders/Adherence feedback) → No Reminders/feedback

Pre-intervention Period (3 months) → Intervention Period (6 months) → Post-Intervention Follow-up Period (3 months)

Month 0: Enrollment in Study → Month 3: Randomization of Enrolled Patients → Month 9: End of Active Intervention → Month 12: End of Follow-up Period
What happened in intervention arm?

1. SMS reminder to cell phone if device unopened within 30 minutes of dose time
   - Patients chose one of 10 possible reminders; examples:
     - *Carry on, carry on!*
     - *Be healthy, have a happy family.*
     - :)

2. Wisepill data used in counseling sessions
   - At monthly clinic visits, Wisepill report given to patient
   - Patients <95% adherence given counseling using report

What happened in comparison arm?

- No reminder messages
- Wisepill report NOT shared with patient
Study endpoints

Impact on adherence (primary endpoint)
- % ≥95% adherent post-intervention (M 9)
- Mean adherence in Month 9

Adherence measure (‘on time’ measure):

\[# \text{doses taken} +/- 1 \text{hour of scheduled time}\]
\[# \text{prescribed doses}\]

Impact on clinical markers
- CD4 (cells/µl) mean change: M3 to M9
- Undetectable Viral load (UDVL) (RT PCR: <50 copies/ml): % UDVL in M9
## Patients’ characteristics at randomization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N (%) or Mean (SD)</td>
<td>N (%) or Mean (SD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=62)</td>
<td>(N=57)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male)</td>
<td>41 (66.1)</td>
<td>35 (61.4)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>36.5 (10.7)</td>
<td>38.8 (9.9)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>24 (38.7)</td>
<td>38 (66.7)</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary only</td>
<td>14 (22.6)</td>
<td>13 (22.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle/secondary school</td>
<td>34 (54.8)</td>
<td>35 (61.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond Secondary School</td>
<td>14 (22.6)</td>
<td>9 (15.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently employed (yes)</td>
<td>35 (56.5)</td>
<td>31 (54.4)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly income (yuan) (n=64)</td>
<td>2593 (2456)</td>
<td>3333 (5950)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05; ** p<0.01
## Patients’ characteristics at randomization

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<tr>
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<th>Intervention (N=62)</th>
<th>Comparison (N=57)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD4 count at baseline</td>
<td>386 (150)</td>
<td>367 (192)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDVL at baseline (N=118)</td>
<td>42 (67.7)</td>
<td>54 (94.7)</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on ART (months)</td>
<td>29.5 (32.3)</td>
<td>33.3 (27.5)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice/daily regimen (vs. once a day regimen)</td>
<td>38 (61.3)</td>
<td>45 (79.0)</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used injectable street drug (ever)</td>
<td>7 (11.3)</td>
<td>8 (14.0)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used non-injectable drug (ever)</td>
<td>8 (12.9)</td>
<td>9 (15.8)</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presumed transmission route</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex with HIV+ man</td>
<td>37 (59.7)</td>
<td>18 (31.6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex with HIV+ woman</td>
<td>9 (14.5)</td>
<td>15 (26.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared needles</td>
<td>5 (8.1)</td>
<td>7 (12.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>2 (3.2)</td>
<td>5 (8.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/other</td>
<td>9 (14.5)</td>
<td>5 (21.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05; ** p<0.01
At Month 3, no significant differences between intervention and comparison arms.

At Month 9, large increase in adherence in intervention arm, regardless of measure; no significant increase in comparison arm.
Impact of the intervention
Comparison of mean adherence: pre-intervention period vs. intervention period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Pre-intervention (M 1-3)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Intervention (M 4-9)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean, % (SD) n=61</td>
<td>Mean, % (SD) n=55</td>
<td>Mean, % (SD) n=61</td>
<td>Mean, % (SD) n=55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-time</td>
<td>91.6 (12.0)</td>
<td>93.2 (10.4)</td>
<td>96.3 (5.9)</td>
<td>89.5 (14.5)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion taken</td>
<td>94.7 (9.0)</td>
<td>95.4 (9.0)</td>
<td>97.5 (3.7)</td>
<td>93.2 (10.5)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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At Month 3, no significant differences between intervention and comparison arms.

At Month 9, large increase in adherence in intervention arm, regardless of measure; no significant increase in comparison arm.
Adherence over time, stratified by baseline adherence (low vs. high)

Monthly adherence by adherence category at Month 3, intervention vs. control (on-time measure)

- Control group, high adherers, N=38
- Control group, low adherers, N=17
- Intervention group, high adherers, N=38
- Intervention group, low adherers, N=23
Proportion of subjects achieving adherence $\geq 95\%$

Effect of Real Time Feedback on rates of optimal adherence in Month 9

Using on-time adherence measure
## Biological impact of intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean change in CD4 (x1000 cells/ml)</td>
<td>+ 53</td>
<td>+ 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No change in UDVL (nearly 100% UDVL at baseline)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysis of late doses: the effect of reminders among subjects who hit 30 minute mark without taking dose

Comparison group
N=2206

Intervention group
N=1721

Proportion of doses taken on time (p<0.0001)
One patient, 6 months of intervention: Wisepill data are powerful!

Reminders and device openings by date, CATS Intervention group

Patient code=89

Doses taken on time (78%)  Doses taken late (22%)
Conclusions

We found:

• Real-time feedback intervention – a personalized intervention that delivers triggered reminders + data-informed counseling as back up – improved on-time adherence

• Results especially promising with low adherers

• No evidence of impact on CD4 counts
CATS team & acknowledgements

- **BU CGHD**
  - Lora Sabin (PhD)
  - Mary Bachman DeSilva (ScD)
  - Allen Gifford (MD)
  - Christopher Gill (MD)
  - Taryn Vian (PhD)
  - Ariel Falconer (MPH)

- **FHI 360/China**
  - Zhong Li (MS)
  - Cheng Feng (PhD) (former China Country Director)
  - Xie Wubin (MPH)

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  - All clinic staff members

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  - Xu Keyi (MD)

- **Harvard University/Mass General Hospital**
  - David Bangsberg (MD)
  - Jessica Haberer (MD)
Extra slides in case needed
Effect of intervention on adherence (proportion taken measure)

Monthly adherence by adherence category at Month 3, intervention vs. control
(proportion taken measure)
Proportion at optimal adherence levels (≥ 90%)

Effect of Real Time Feedback on rates of adherence in Month 9

Using on-time adherence measure
Proportion of subjects achieving adherence ≥ 80%

Effect of Real Time Feedback on rates of adherence in Month 9

Using on-time adherence measure
Changes in counseling frequency among intervention subjects, stratified by baseline adherence

Low adherers (n=22)

High adherers (n=38)

First visit of intervention period