



PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

This month, we are highlighting the exciting presentations ACTG made at the recent International AIDS Society (IAS) meeting in Mexico City, July 21-24, 2019:

- VRC 607/ACTG 5378 was featured as an [oral presentation](#) at IAS 2019 by Dr. Grace Chen and colleagues. A two-part study conducted by the Vaccine Research Center (VRC) and ACTG, VRC 607/ACTG 5378 investigated two CD4 binding site HIV-1 broadly neutralizing antibodies (bNAbs) in treatment naïve

HIV-infected adults: VRC01LS (Part A) and VRC07-523LS (Part B). This is the first in-person trial conducted of these agents among people living with HIV, with previous studies restricted to pre-clinical evaluations or those in HIV-uninfected volunteers. The study evaluated the safety, tolerability, antiviral activity, and pharmacokinetic parameters of these bNAbs in 16 HIV-infected viremic adults between the ages of 18-70 years. Overall, both were safe and well-tolerated, with minimal side effects. Importantly, antiviral activity of ≥ 0.5 log was observed in 3/7 VRC01LS recipients and >1.2 log for 8/9 VRC07-523LS recipients in this small study, providing tantalizing hope for the efficacy of these novel agents as they advance into later stage trials.

- The OPTIONS Study (A5241), which asked whether NRTIs are essential in salvage regimens, was presented as a [poster](#) at IAS 2019 by Dr. Rajesh Gandhi and colleagues. This study, which found that salvage regimens that did not include NRTIs gave similar rates of durable virologic suppression as those that included NRTIs, was also published in the [Journal of Infectious Diseases](#) in May. For more information on this important study, please read the summary that appeared in the [June ACTG newsletter](#).

ACTG IN THE MEDIA

JCI study generates extensive media coverage

The ACTG study, "Persistent HIV-infected cells in cerebrospinal fluid are associated with poorer neurocognitive performance," published in the July 15 issue of the [Journal of Clinical Investigation](#), received widespread media coverage over the past month. The study found an association between residual HIV DNA in cerebrospinal fluid despite plasma virologic suppression and poorer performance on cognitive tests, suggesting there may be a link between HIV persistence in the brain compartment and neurological complications in some individuals. The paper, which ranked three of 66 among "attention paid to" articles in this issue of *JCI*, was covered in a variety of media outlets, including, [Infectious Disease News](#), [MedPage Today](#), [POZ](#), [UPI](#), [AJMC](#), [U.S. News and World Report](#), [News Medical](#) and [MedIndia](#), among others. For more information on this important study, please read the summary that appeared in the [July ACTG newsletter](#). Congratulations to the team, led by Serena Spudich, M.D., Yale University, the late Kevin Robertson, Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and John Mellors, M.D., University of Pittsburgh, on generating such robust media coverage of an important finding!



INVESTIGATOR HIGHLIGHT

Dr. Jennifer Price, University of California, San Francisco, ACTG CTU

Dr. Jennifer Price is an Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and the Director of the UCSF Viral Hepatitis Center. She joined the ACTG Hepatitis Transformative Science Group in 2018 and has since become an investigator on A5379, the BEe-HIVE Study. BEe-HIVE is evaluating the HEPLISAV-B vaccine in adults living with HIV who have a history of nonresponse to HBV vaccination or who are HBV vaccine-naïve. Dr. Price is also an Investigator on A5382, one of the first ACTG protocols aimed towards curing HBV.

Dr. Price's research overall focuses on examining the contributions of novel and traditional factors associated with liver disease progression in large observational HIV cohorts. In 2019, she launched UCSF's first mobile liver care unit, which aims to improve access to viral hepatitis screening and high-quality liver-related health care among medically and geographically marginalized communities.

Dr. Price looks forward to advancing the key priorities of the Hepatitis Transformative Science Group in the ACTG through her continued involvement in developing HBV cure strategies in both HBV mono-infected and HIV/HBV co-infected individuals. The ACTG values Dr. Price's contributions to the network, as well as the Hepatitis TSG, in remaining focused on viral hepatitis that can be cured and eliminated in the face of improving outcomes for HIV infection worldwide.



CAB MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Danielle Campbell, Los Angeles, CA

Danielle Campbell joined the ACTG in 2013, bringing with her a focus on racial and gender equity and a commitment to working with communities who are medically and socially disenfranchised. Describing her community as “all people living with or affected by HIV or other sexual health injustices around the world,” she wants to change the way the conversation unfolds for those who are the most marginalized and vulnerable.

Having always had a penchant for science, she says she found her “sweet spot” when she joined ACTG’s Community Scientific Subcommittee. “There’s just something about being at the forefront of the science that I really love,” she said. She believes she brings a diverse perspective to the group as a young woman of color.

Danielle advocates for more intergenerational conversation, noting that there is sometimes discord between older and younger advocates. “It took some of us to really come out and say, ‘We want to work with you; for you to teach us the hard lessons and support us as we fight to take us to the end! We want to understand and co-advocate with you,’” she said. She notes the challenges, “They’ve watched generations of people die, whereas I have not. It is my hope that we all come together across race, age, gender, geography, and lived experiences to address the root causes of HIV and let those factors lead our work.”

ACTG LOC NEW EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT



Jenna Conley recently joined the ACTG as our director of communications. Jenna has worked in HIV communications for more than 20 years, on behalf of non-profits, government institutions, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies, and public relations agencies. Her efforts over the last two decades have focused on scientific communications, community engagement, and strategic counsel. Jenna will help the ACTG expand our communication efforts, including a new website, an enhanced social media presence, and an increasing media profile. Please join us in welcoming her!

NEWS TO SHARE?

Do you have interesting ACTG-related news to share? Has your site done something exceptional? What's the latest news about your study? Do you have job postings or any other ACTG-related information? We want to know! Please submit your news to *ACTG Leadership & Operations Center Executive Director Alexis Sexton*.



Mailing Address

actg.communications@fstrf.org