

ASHA Improving Health and Nutrition of Indian Women with AIDS and Their Children

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Project Description

The overall goal of this study is to enhance the physical and mental health of rural Indian women living with AIDS and their children. We will achieve these goals through the use of trained village women as Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) to enhance the health of women and children through improved ART adherence, CD4 levels, and physical and mental health. This Indo-US collaboration between University of California, Los Angeles, University of California, San Francisco and All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) builds on our previous work with rural women living with AIDS and our successful ASHA program.

Specific objectives include:

- Using a 2x2 factorial design, we plan to assess the effects of nutrition training and/or food supplements on primary outcomes for rural women living with AIDS in improving body composition and immune status (CD4 levels) as assessed at 6-, 12- and 18-month follow-up.
- Examining the effects of the program arms and their interaction on adherence to ART, psychological health, nutritional adequacy, and lipid profile over time.

Significance

Rural women living with AIDS experience profound challenges in accessing and following treatment for AIDS, while caring for children and maintaining a positive mental health outcome; yet, there has been very little research conducted regarding their nutritional needs and that of their growing children, some of whom may also have HIV/AIDS. This study is innovative as it addresses the role of ASHA care and support and a focus on nutrition in improving the physical and emotional health of a very high risk population - rural women in India who are on ART and their vulnerable families; strengthen family health; and obtain data for a multi-site implementation study. By understanding the adequacy and role of nutrition and strengthened family health outcome, we hope to develop readily accessible and feasible scale-up assessment and delivery modalities to use in rural public health clinics. This program, if found efficacious, could easily be scaled up and sustained by local governmental and non-governmental organizations in rural and urban settings across India and elsewhere.

Project End Date: June 2018