

NURSE CASE MANAGEMENT

SPOTLIGHT ON DECANTING

Gauteng | Ekurhuleni South | Germiston City Clinic | PHC

Average Monthly Headcount: 4338



IMPROVEMENT AREA & AIM

The National Adherence Guidelines of 2020 expanded the eligibility criteria for decanting stable antiretroviral therapy (ART) patients to include those who had received at least 6 months of ART and are virally suppressed. Germiston City Clinic had a low rate of decanting at 6 months due to over scripting and poor data systems among Nurse Clinicians.

The aim of this project was to improve the number of patients decanted at 6 months after ART initiation from a baseline median of 142 per month, October 2020 to January 2021, to median of 200 per month by February to June 2021.



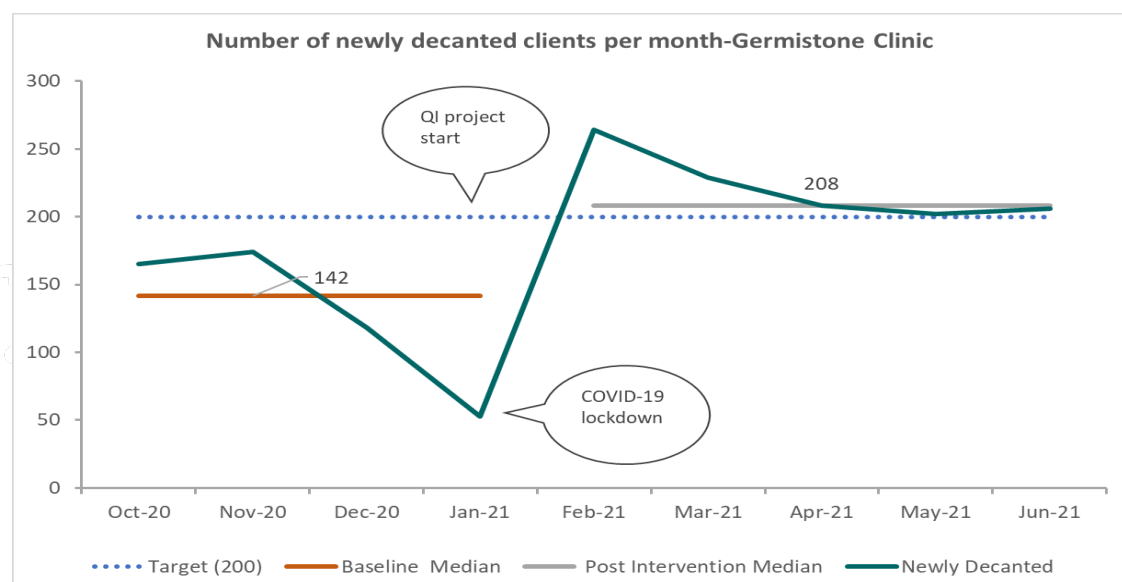
DESCRIPTION

All patients newly enrolled on ART were assigned a nurse initiated and managed antiretroviral therapy (NIMART) Nurse Case Manager (NCM) and became part of a 6-month case management (CM) programme. Patients saw the same NCM throughout the programme who provided ongoing counselling, adherence support, and general management, including blood draws, which helped to build a strong rapport. At 6 months, following results from VL tests, the NCM offered decanting to all virally suppressed patients according to national guidelines. Once decanted, patients graduated from the case management (CM) programme.



OUTCOMES

After implementing this project at Germiston City Clinic, the number of decanted ART patients improved from a baseline median of 142 patients per month, in the period October 2020 to January 2021, to a post intervention median of 208 patients per month during the follow-up period from February to June 2021. Patients appreciated the continuity of seeing the same clinician for the first 6 months of treatment. The NCM improved VL testing at 6-months and this improved enrolment into differentiated models of care (DMOC).



STEPS TO IMPLEMENT

- ❑ All newly enrolled patients are referred to the NCM.
- ❑ Filing Clerk (FC) records room number of NCM on patient-held appointment card for ease of navigation by FC when patient comes to the clinic.
- ❑ FC retrieves files for all patients on the day of the visit and takes these to the NCM consulting room.
- ❑ FC escorts patients on CM to NCM's consulting room.
- ❑ NCM continues to follow and see patients on CM until they complete 6 months of ART.
- ❑ NCM introduces the concept of DMOC and provides adherence support to the patients during each visit.
- ❑ At 6 months, the NCM performs VL testing and other needed tests.
- ❑ After 2 weeks, patient returns for VL result and decisions about decanting are made.
- ❑ Consenting eligible ART patients are decanted into modality of choice, and NCM registers them on SyNCH and issues a 6-months repeat script.
- ❑ NCM dispenses 2-months supply of ART.
- ❑ NCM also issues a new patient held card (the Dablap medication card) with dates for collection at pick-up point and clinic review.
- ❑ Patient graduates from case management programme.

FACILITATORS

- Rotated Nurse Clinicians through the NCM role.
- Facility management buy-in.
- Memorandum on decanting at 6 months distributed to staff by the OM.
- Having a designated Primary Nurse seeing patients for 6 months built trust and rapport.

CHALLENGES & ADAPTATIONS

- VL blood results delayed from lab and without results patients cannot be decanted.
- VL blood samples rejected by the lab so patients have to return for repeat blood draw.
- Unsuppressed VL → This led to delays in decanting some patients, but the numbers were usually very small.

Disclaimer: This Spotlight was developed and implemented by *The Aurum Institute* and DoH staff, with support from OPIQ South Africa. This resource can be freely used and distributed, with acknowledgement of *The Aurum Institute* and DoH, so long as it does not result in commercial gain. The findings and conclusions in this Spotlight are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies: this project has been supported by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the Centers for the Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under the terms of grant number: 6 NU2GGH002227.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ✓ ART – antiretroviral therapy
- ✓ CM – case management
- ✓ DMOC – differentiated models of care
- ✓ NIMART – nurse initiated and managed antiretroviral therapy
- ✓ NCM – nurse case manager
- ✓ OM – operational manager
- ✓ VL – viral load

STAFFING

- ✓ NIMART Nurse
- ✓ Filing Clerk

RESOURCES

- ✓ SyNCH computer
- ✓ Patient held cards
- ✓ Clinical Chart

LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ One Nurse Case Manager for 6 months -strengthens rapport with patients and improves continuity of treatment
- ✓ Change idea improves VL testing and management of results
- ✓ One-stop shop is convenient for patients