



04 March 2013

Statement by Child and adolescent Committee of SAHIV Clinicians Society regarding Functional cure of HIV positive child in USA

We note with interest and excitement the announcement at the CROI conference in Atlanta, Georgia of the functional cure of a 26 month old child with HIV infection.

This is very exciting because it provides proof of concept that if an HIV infected infant is started on antiretroviral therapy early enough there is a chance that the infection can be eradicated before it takes hold in the body.

These findings do however warrant further research.

This child was started on treatment exceptionally early at the age of 30 hours of life. Usually in South Africa a child is started on antiretroviral treatment following a diagnosis of HIV infection at 6 weeks. For this reason it is very unlikely that there will be any babies in South Africa in the same situation as this child. **It is vitally important that children on treatment do not stop their antiretrovirals.** Furthermore standard tests for HIV, conducted on children who started on treatment early on in life, may give false negative results. Children who have been proven to have HIV infection early on and are on treatment, should be discouraged from being re-tested later on as a result of this phenomenon.

Any concerns around a child's HIV status should be discussed with a Paediatric HIV expert before any drastic change in management.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN HIV CLINICIANS SOCIETY

