



News

Extension of HIV treatment at Newlands Clinic

As is the case in many other third world countries, to date only first and second line regimens for HIV treatment have been provided in Zimbabwe. However, third line regimens are now also available. Newlands Clinic is one of only four clinics that will be allowed to offer the corresponding treatment in future.

HIV therapy is extremely complex and requires continual and precise monitoring of blood levels. This is because if the patients do not take their medication regularly or get infected with a resistant strain of the virus, there is a significant threat of them no longer responding to certain treatment. The consequences of this are severe, as such resistance can ultimately lead to the patient dying.

The availability of third line regimens is therefore a very important step forward for HIV treatment in Zimbabwe, and means that patients failing on first and second line therapy will be able to continue treatment. However, the third line regimens are significantly more expensive, and will therefore be available only in limited amounts for the time being.

Prof. Ruedi Lüthy: "Given the high prices, the conditions for successful HIV therapy are still much worse in the third world than they are in Switzerland. Millions of people across the world are receiving only insufficient treatment, or none at all. Thus far we have had no other options when treatment with second line regimens fails, and have been forced to watch the patients die. I am very happy that these new regimens will enable us to continue with treatment in such cases in future."

Newlands Clinic is one of only four clinics that that will be allowed to offer this therapy in Zimbabwe, and already works together on training with the other three public clinics.

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