

CRITICAL REVIEW: CHIVA CONFERENCE May 12th 2017

Debate: To Treat or Not to Treat? 'Long Term Non-Progressors Should Start Treatment Regardless of CD4 Count'

FOR: Professor Nigel Klein from the Institute of Child Health at UCL Great Ormond Street Childrens Hospital

AGAINST: Dr Andrew Riordan Consultant Paediatrician from Alder Hey Childrens Hospital argued against

Prior to debate voting showed roughly an equal split of the audience with slightly more in favour.

Professor Nigel Klein argued for, beginning with the natural progression of HIV Viral Load and the CD4 count, highlighting 'long term non-progressor' was not a stable state. He included several excellent arguments for starting new treatments including reduced side effects, pill size and numbers, inflammatory markers being reduced and children having an active thymus, ultimately having a robust, higher CD4 count going into adulthood. He touched on what was possibly the deciding factor when he mentioned potential cure would depend on viral reservoirs being reduced, which was better achieved with early treatment.

Dr Andrew Riordan argued against. He gave an informative, valiant attempt to win over the audience suggesting that the PENTA Guidelines to treat all were based on no robust evidence or trial, highlighting a couple of papers which appeared to back up his argument. He then went on to point out that in his words, 'all drugs are poison', referring to toxicity and side effects leading to reduced adherence and more resistance. Overall however he was unable to persuade the audience and the revote showed much larger numbers opting for starting treatment earlier regardless of CD4 count.

Ailsa Pickering