

Module 5 – Educating Patients about Viral Load

Learning objectives:

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:



- State the key messages to be communicated to patients about viral load
- Identify the tools and patient education settings that can help spread key viral load messages

Target audiences: Clinicians and Counsellors

Pre-requisites: Module 1 and Module 2

Participant materials required: None

Special preparations before facilitating: Post-it notes

Icon	Meaning
	Refer to Handout
	Customize the slide for local context

Module-at-a-glance

Segment	What you do	Time	Handouts
Slides 1-2	State the module objective.	0:03	
Slides 3-5	Explain the slides according to the content notes.	0:05	
Slides 6-7	Conduct activity 5A: What Do Patients Need to Know About Viral Load according to content notes.	0:15	
Slides 8	Conduct activity 5B: Key Messages for Viral Load for Patients according to content notes.	0:25	
Slide 9-13	Explain the slides according to the content notes.	0:10	
Slide 14	Invite participants to read the key messages on the slide.	0:02	
TOTAL MODULE DURATION:		1:00	

Slide Number	Content Notes for PowerPoint Slides
3	<p>Heading - Shifting the paradigm from CD4 to viral load</p> <p>Since the start of ART, patients have been educated on CD4 monitoring as the way to define who is eligible to start ART and to monitor if treatment is working well. As noted in modules 1 and 2, with scale-up of viral load capacity and roll-out of test and start, this monitoring paradigm needs to be shifted from CD4 to viral load. This cannot happen without targeted interventions and the use of adapted tools that enhance patient's education. In this session we will discuss how to do this.</p>
4	<p>Heading - Why do we need to educate patients on viral load?</p> <p>Educating patients on viral load serves two objectives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowing what viral load monitoring means can reinforce a patients' adherence. Understanding the meaning of a good viral load result may help reinforce good adherence for a patient. Receiving a bad viral load result may make the patient realize the need to improve adherence. 2. Patients who are aware of the benefits of viral load testing will be more likely to request their viral load and their viral load results, and hence not be completely dependent on the initiative of the nurse or doctor.
5	<p>Heading - What Do Patients Need to Know About Viral Load?</p> <p>Remind the participants of all that they learned about viral load in the first module. However, some of this information is essential for patients to know, while other information is more useful for nurses/laboratorians/clinicians. When it comes to patient education, keep it simple.</p>
6-7	<p>Heading - Activity 5A: What Do Patients Need to Know About Viral Load?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce the activity using slide 6 2. Ask participants to pair up 3. Distribute post-it notes 4. After 5 minutes, collect the post-it notes and stick them on a flipchart 5. In a large group, review participants' responses and group similar ones together 6. After discussion of responses, show slide 7 to review the list of key questions and topics. Add participants' topics or questions if not already on the list.
8	<p>Heading - Activity 5B: Key Messages for Viral Load for Patients</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce the activity using slide 8 2. Ask participants to pair up 3. Distribute post-it notes 4. Keep slide #7 projected on the screen during the exercise 5. After 10 minutes, collect the post-it notes and stick them on a flipchart 6. In a large group, review participants' responses 7. [OPTIONAL] Ask participants to vote for the best key messages
9	<p>Heading - Tools for Patient Education</p> <p>Key messages can be communicated using different tools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A flipchart can help with individual or group education on viral load; images will enhance the learning process for patients. ▪ A leaflet can be used to spread detailed information to literate patients. This is an example of a handout or leaflet that can be given to literate patients to emphasize key

Slide Number	Content Notes for PowerPoint Slides
	<p>messages. PLWHIV volunteers can use handouts to share these messages in their network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Posters and stickers can be used to spread very basic messages, but not detailed information.
10	<p>Heading – Who needs to know about viral load monitoring?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask participants: Which of these groups need to be aware of viral load monitoring? ▪ Probe with questions, such as: Is it important for a patient who has just tested positive for HIV to know that they will get a viral load test after starting ART?
11	<p>Heading – How to educate patients about viral load monitoring?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The priority groups for patient education are PLHIV on ART, including those with a high viral load. ▪ For patients who are starting ART, key messages on viral load should be routinely included in ART initiation counseling sessions (see next slide for an example). ▪ For patients who are already on ART and have completed ART initiation counseling before implementation of viral load monitoring, messages on VL can be shared through targeted patient education interventions. For example, a short group session could be held for all patients who are due for viral load that day. ▪ For patients with high viral loads, key messages should be repeated in the first enhanced adherence counseling session.
12	<p>Heading – Patient Education on ART and Viral Load Testing</p> <p>This is just one example of an algorithm for ART initiation counseling and VL education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Viral load is explained at month 2 of the follow-up to prepare patients for their first viral load that will be taken sometime between month 3 and month 6. ▪ Routine adherence counseling is stopped after the first viral load – only patients with high viral loads receive enhanced adherence counseling.
13	<p>Heading – Other Settings for Patient Education</p> <p>Here are two examples of settings where patient education is conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The picture on the left shows a health talk that explains the meaning of viral load to PLHIV while they wait for their medication refills. These health talks are done daily by the counselor/nurse at the start of the day. Over a period of 3 months, all patients on ART had the opportunity to hear the health talk. After 3 months, another topic for the health talk was chosen. ▪ The picture on the right shows a counselor using a flipchart with pictures. <p>It is critical that interventions occur in places where patients on ART gather. Ask the group to brainstorm ideas and plans for other focused patient education interventions. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Showing videos in the patient waiting area ▪ Performing short sketches ▪ Training volunteers of networks of PLHIV to spread key viral load messages in their networks
14	<p>Heading – Module 6: Key messages</p> <p>Invite participants to read the key messages on the slide.</p>