

Synthesising HIV Clinical Guidelines on Characteristics, Challenges, and Facilitators of Rapid Initiation of Antiretroviral Therapy: A Rapid Scoping Review

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Background

Context:

- Rapid antiretroviral therapy (ART) initiation, which involves starting treatment shortly after HIV diagnosis for treatment-naïve people with HIV (PWH), is believed to improve outcomes. However, there is no global consensus on what "rapid" means, with definitions and timelines varying widely across countries and even within local healthcare practices.
- The reasons for these inconsistencies are poorly understood, potentially posing challenges for healthcare providers in implementing clear and effective protocols.

Objective: To review and synthesize rapid ART initiation recommendations from HIV clinical guidelines in OECD countries, identifying key characteristics, facilitators, and barriers.

Methods

Study design: Rapid review

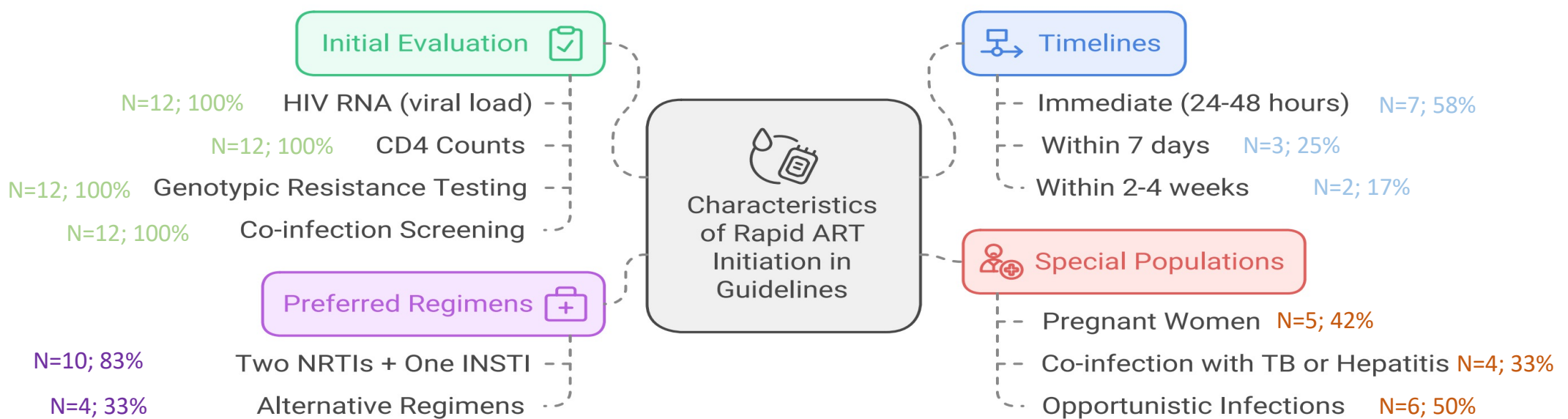
Search strategy: Conducted with a health science librarian in March 2023, focusing on documents from January 2017 to May 2023. Targeted searches of government and health websites followed. Guidelines were reviewed for updates in September 2024.

Study selection: Inclusion: Guidelines that include content on initiation of ART from OECD countries and international health organizations. Exclusion: Non-ART-focused, non-English/French, exclusively focused on PrEP and PEP, or HIV testing.

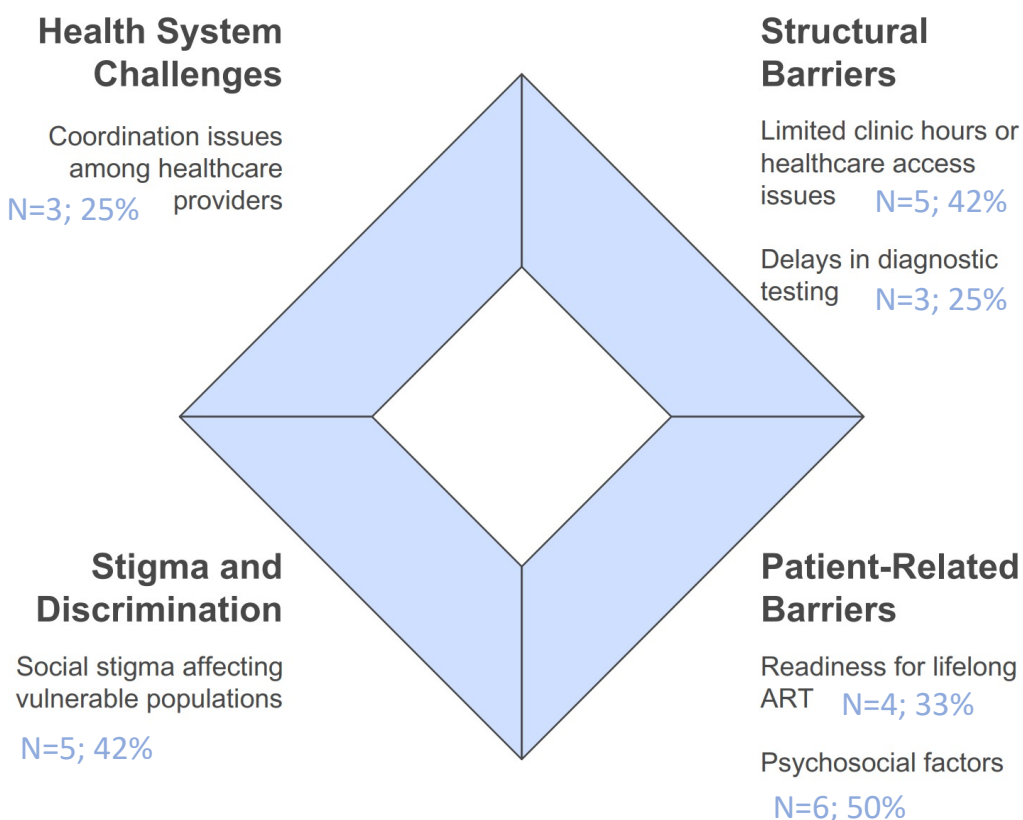
Data extraction: Data on definitions, timelines, regimens, special populations, challenges, and facilitators.

Data synthesis: Relevant data underwent content analysis to generate sub-categories, categories, and overarching themes.

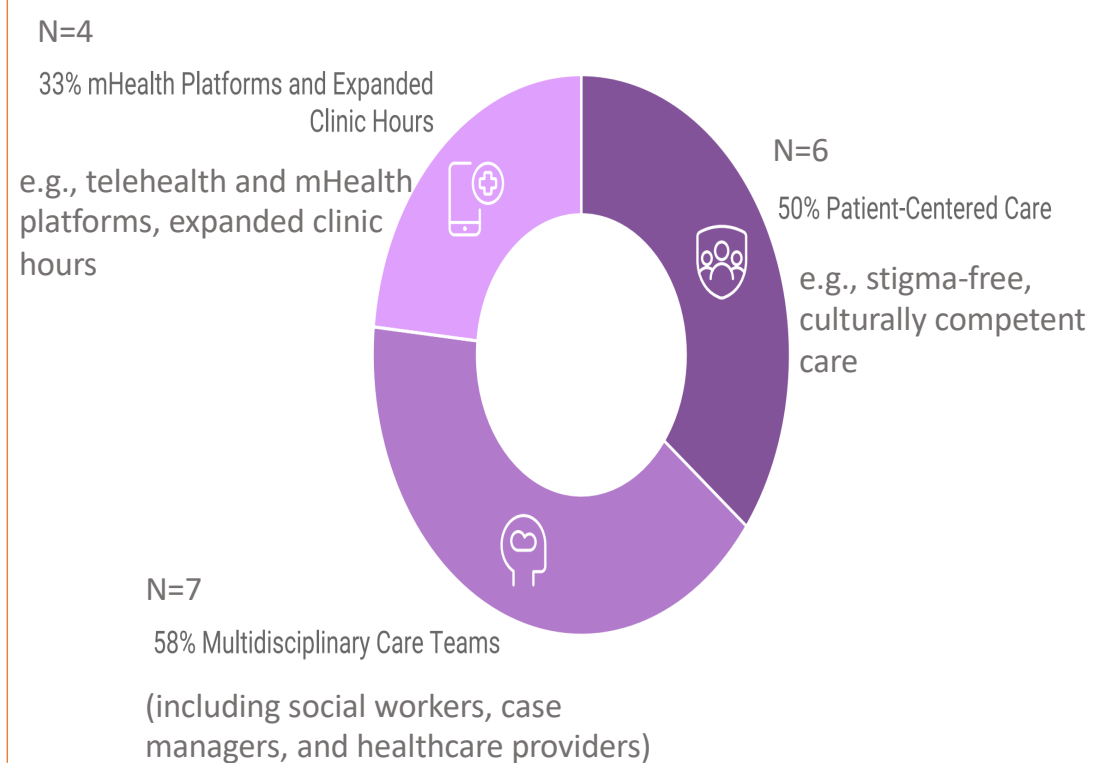
Preliminary Results (N=12)



Barriers to Rapid ART Initiation



Key Facilitators of Rapid ART Initiation



Conclusion: This review reveals most HIV treatment guidelines in OECD countries that address rapid ART initiation agree on initiation within 7 days of diagnosis, how to evaluate patients for rapid ART, and appropriate ART regimens in this context. Reported implementation challenges and facilitators vary. These findings reflect areas of convergence as well as differing practices and considerations across contexts.