Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

PEERNaija—A Mobile Health Platform Incentivizing Medication Adherence Among Youth Living with HIV in Nigeria: Study Protocol for a Randomized Controlled Trial

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Poor medication adherence is a major barrier to HIV control among youth living with HIV (Y-PLWH). The PEERNaija application (app) is an adapted smartphone app grounded in social cognitive and contigency management theories and designed to harness peer-based social incentives and conditional financial incentives to promote medication adherence. The app delivers a multifaceted medication adherence intervention including (1) peer-based social incentives, (2) financial incentives, (3) virtual peer social support, and (4) early clinic-based outreach for non-adherent Y-PLWH. A pilot trial of the app will be conducted in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with the 4th largest HIV epidemic, and home to 10% of the world's four million Y-PLWH. In this randomized controlled trial, we will compare implementation outcomes (feasibility, acceptability, appropriateness measured via validated scales, enrollment and application installation rates, feedback surveys and focus group discussions with participants, and back-end application data), and preliminary efficacy (in improving medication adherence and viral suppression) of the PEERNaija app at 6 months. Participants in Arm 1 (PEERNaija) will receive daily medication reminders, peer-based social incentives, and virtual peer social support. Participants in Arm 2 (PEERNaija +) will additionally receive a conditional financial incentive based on their adherence performance. Eligibility for Y-PLWH includes (1) being aged 14-29 years, (2) being on ART, (3) owning a smartphone, (4) being willing to download an app, and (5) being able to read simple text in English. This study will serve as the basis for a larger intervention trial evaluating the PEERNaija app (and the integration of mHealth, incentive, and peer-support-based strategies) to improve HIV outcomes in a critically important region of the world for Y-PLWH.

Journal:

Pilot and Feasibility Studies

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