

Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) is the administration of at least three different medications known as Anti-RetroViral drugs (ARV) in order to suppress the replication of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Treatment with these combinations of drugs is also known as Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART). ART is not a cure. It must be taken for life and is costly. ART is delivered as part of a comprehensive care, which includes Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT), the diagnosis and treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), Tuberculosis (TB), Opportunistic Infections (OI), and the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) as well as the treatment of pregnant women.

ART changes a uniformly fatal disease to a manageable chronic illness. Successful use of ART suppresses HIV viral replication, consequently slowing down disease progression, improving immunity and delaying mortality. Even if ART is not a cure, it prolongs and enhances the quality of life of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Once ART is started, it has to be taken for life with better than 95% adherence.