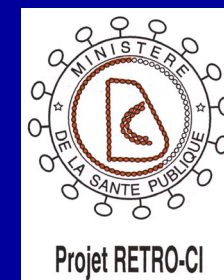


Limiting loss to follow-up during a microbicide efficacy trial: experiences during the COL-1492 trial in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

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Background

- Female sex workers are at high risk of sexual HIV exposure; so are good candidates for microbicide efficacy trials
- However sex workers are highly mobile; so are challenging to follow for long periods in an open cohort
- A long-standing dedicated clinic for female sex workers in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire was one of the sites of the N-9 microbicide efficacy trial, (1998-2000)

Objective

To promote retention of female sex workers participating in the N-9 microbicide efficacy trial in Abidjan

Strategies (1)

Home visits

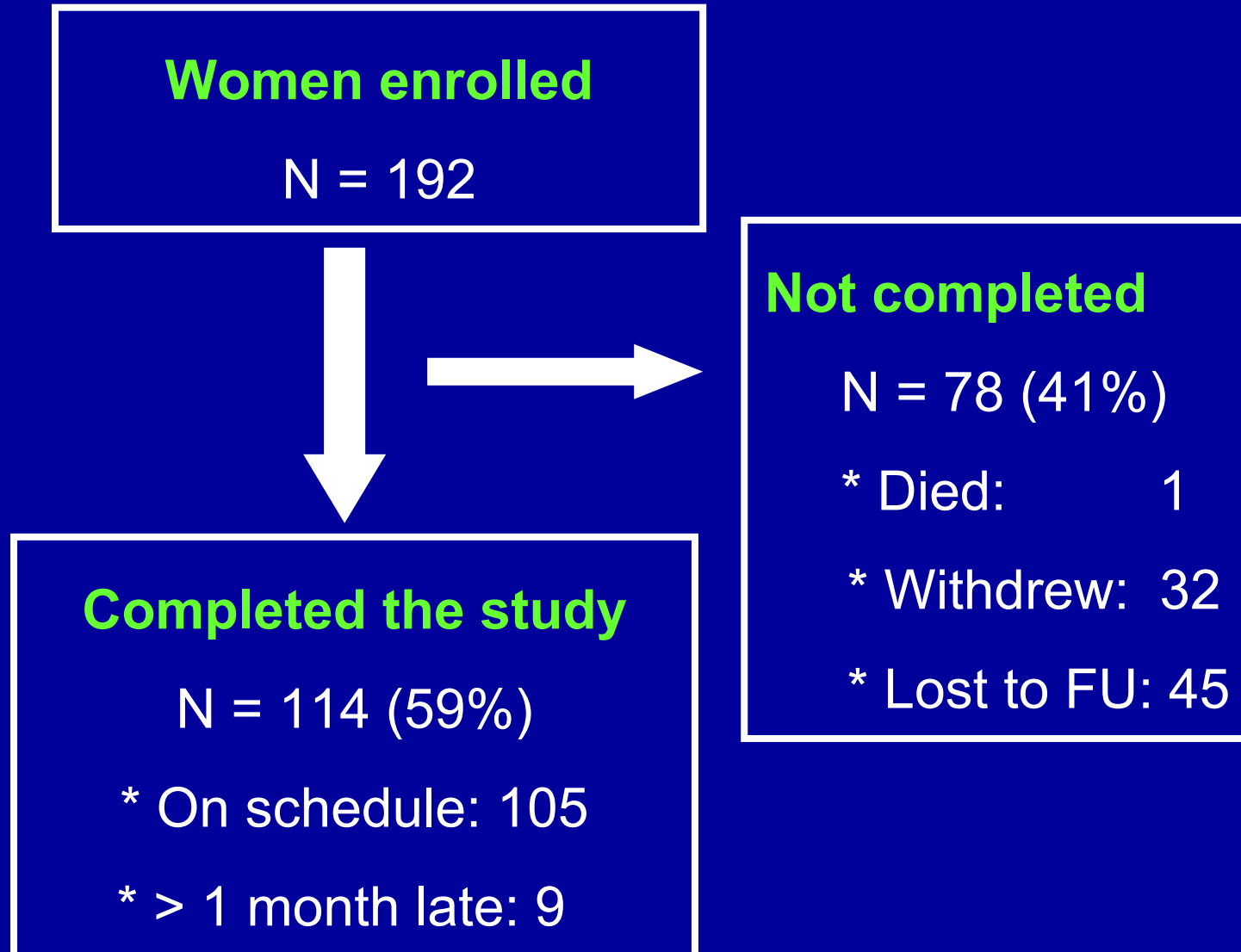
- A software package was developed to track visits and identify missed appointments
- At enrolment, consent for home visits was sought in the event of a missed visit and an initial home visit was made
- During follow-up, social workers visited the home of participants who were more than 1 week late for their scheduled appointment

Strategies (2)

Group appointments

- Beginning January 1999, peer-groups of 2 to 6 sex workers from the same neighbourhood were formed and a group leader appointed
- Same date appointments were given to the peer-group
- Incentives were given to women attending their appointments with their peer-group

Open cohort study profile



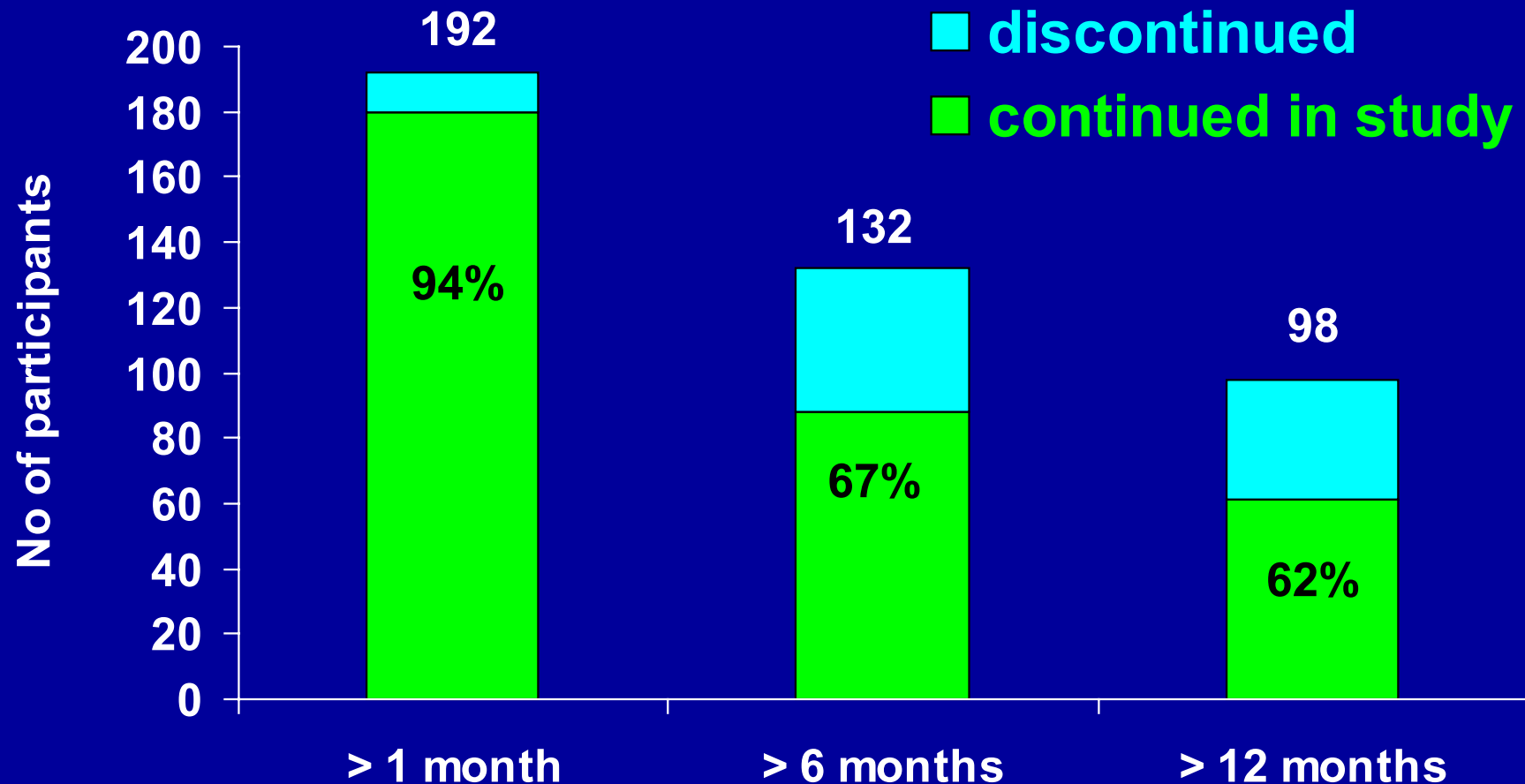
Home visits

- At enrolment, 70% (135/192) accepted home visits
- During follow-up, 72% (97/135) of the consenting women had at least 1 home visit
 - 100% (9/9) of those completing the study, and > 1 month late
 - 76% (34/45) of those lost to follow-up

Group appointments

- 20 peer-groups involving 56 participants were formed during the trial
- 11 groups involving 42 participants remained active until the end of the study
- 40% of sex workers completing the study had same date group appointments

Retention rates among eligible participants in the open cohort COL-1492, Abidjan



Conclusions

- We have identified some effective strategies to improve retention rates among the highly mobile population of female sex workers in Abidjan
- These strategies include:
 - Home visits in the event of a missed visit (with prior consent)
 - Promotion of peer-groups with same-date appointments

Discussion

- Female sex workers would benefit from an efficacious microbicide or other female controlled method
- For both ethical and scientific reasons sex workers should not be excluded from such research
- However as follow-up is so critical for accurate interpretation of randomized trials, other effective strategies must be identified to further improve follow-up among sex workers and other mobile populations