Antiretroviral Therapy and Nutrition

technical guidance

Access to antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) is increasing among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in developing countries, as a result of local, national, and international efforts. Issues related to antiretroviral therapy (ART) in resource limited settings have become increasingly relevant to PLWHA, caregivers, service providers, and programmers. Drafted by the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project (FANTA), a technical note now provides information and guidance on the food and nutrition implications of ART and how to manage these in resource limited settings.

Managing the interactions between ART and food and nutrition is a critical factor in the extent to which the therapy is effective in slowing the progression of HIV/AIDS and improving the quality of life of PLWHA. In resource limited settings, many PLWHA lack access to sufficient quantities of nutritious foods, which poses additional challenges to the success of ART. Programmes working with people taking ART may need to strengthen human capacity to address nutritional issues, establish linkages to programmes addressing food and nutrition issues, and incorporate information about drug-food interactions into communication materials, staff training and orientation, and supervision systems.

This technical note summarises the types of ARVs commonly used, offers a framework for understanding drug-food interactions, describes key issues and steps for managing ARV-food interactions, identifies areas of knowledge gaps, and lays out the specific food and nutrition implications of ARVs commonly used in resource limited settings.

While the document focuses on ART, it notes that individuals infected with HIV have special nutritional needs, irrespective of whether they use ART. Furthermore, although access to ART in developing countries is increasing, the majority of PLWHA still do not have access to ART.

The document is available online at www.fantaproject.org or email: fanta@aed.org

1Food and Nutrition Implications of Antiretroviral Therapy in Resource Limited Settings - DRAFT, Tony Castleman, Eleonore Seumo and Bruce Cogill, FANTA, June 2003

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