Aims and Objectives:
The aim of START is to determine if it is better for people with HIV to start anti-HIV drugs earlier than is current practice. CD4+ cells are part of the immune system – when the immune system is strong, the CD4 count is higher. Currently it is recommended that people with HIV start anti-HIV drugs when their CD4+ count drops to 350. START will compare the effects of starting anti-HIV drugs at less than 350 with starting anti-HIV drugs at more than 500 on disease progression and death in people with HIV.

Inclusion Criteria:
Signed informed consent.
Documented HIV infection.
Age greater than or equal to 18 years for the first 4000 participants, age greater than or equal to 35 years for the final 600 participants.
Karnofsky performance score greater than or equal to 80 (an indication that the participant can perform normal activities).
Perceived life expectancy of at least 6 months.
For women of child-bearing potential, willingness to use contraceptives as described in the product information of the ART drugs they are prescribed.
Two consecutive CD4+ cell counts greater than 500 cells/mm3 at least 2 weeks apart within 60 days before randomisation.