

2nd International Conference on

HIV/AIDS, STD & STIS

March 18-19, 2019 | Amsterdam, Netherlands

A cross sectional descriptive study to analyze the social, sexual and reproductive challenges among sero-discordant couples; observations from a tertiary care hospital in northern India

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The term “sero-discordant couples” refers to an intimate partnership in which one partner is HIV positive and the other HIV negative. They form a special population which is constantly at risk of acquiring infection, require safer sexual and reproductive options and are in constant psychological and emotional distress. Aims: To describe the social, sexual and reproductive issues and its impact on sero-discordant couples. Material and Method: A cross sectional descriptive study on HIV sero-discordant couples, admitted or attending our out-patient department, where the couple have not separated. A detailed interview of the partners on social, sexual and reproductive issues was conducted and data was endorsed in pro-forma. Result: 64 sero-discordant couples were included. 62 (96.8%) males were seropositive against 02(3.1%) females. 61 (95.3%) were married and 03(4.6%) were unmarried. 36(56.2%) cases were between the age group of 21

to 35 years, 21(32.8%) between 36 to 55 years and 07(10.9%) between 56 to 70 years of age. 62(96.8%) had heterosexual orientation as against 02(3.1%) who were homosexual. 21 (32.8%) had history of sexual encounter outside the relation while 27(42.1%) were not aware of any source of infection. 51(79.6%) were on ART as against 13(20.3%) not on ART. 31(48.4%) admitted to have a constant strain in relation while 16(25%) were practicing safe sex. 39(60.9%) had fear of disease transmission while 26(40.6%) had fear of pregnancy. 49(76.5%) had children at the time of detection while 15(23.4%) had no issue. 41(64%) expressed desire to have children as compare to 23(35.9%). Conclusion: It is a novel study to highlight the social, psychological and sexual issues encountered by sero-discordant couple which needs to be addressed.

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