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THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS OF HIV-INFECTED PERSONS WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL MORBIDITY IN ZARIA, NIGERIA

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Statement of Problem: It is estimated that more than 330 million persons are living with HIV-infection globally and in Nigeria about 3.4 persons are living with the infection, with an annual death rate of 180,000. Psychological morbidity often accompany chronic illnesses and may be associated with substance abuse, poor health seeking behavior and adherence to treatment program ; it may worsen existing health problems and the overall quality of life. Until the burden is effectively identified, intervention cannot be planned. Until there is cure, the goal is to manage and cope effectively with HIV-infection. Little if any studies have been done in this area in the North West geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study would help to identify high risk groups and prevent the progression and spread of the infection. Aim: To identify HIV-infected persons with psychological morbidity ,accessing HIV- clinic at Shika Hospital , Zaria , Kaduna State; and analyze their socio-demographic profile.

Methodology and Theoretical Orientation: A cross sectional descriptive study was carried out to assess and analyze the socio-demographic characteristics of HIV-infected persons attending Shika hospital Zaria Nigeria , who screened positive for psychological morbidity. A total of 109 HIV-infected persons receiving HAART at Shika clinic, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria, were administered questionnaires; the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) measuring psychological morbidity and socio-demographic data. The participants ranged in age between 18 and 75 years.

Findings: Data were analyzed using SPSS software 15. Both descriptive and inferential Statistics were performed on the data. Results indicate a total prevalence rate of psychological morbidity of 78 percent among participants. Of this, about 16.2 percent were severely distressed, 25.1 percent moderately distressed and 36.7 percent were mildly distressed. The females were more likely to be distressed than men (65 percent vs. 35 percent of those with psychological morbidity, OR=3.5 CI 95 percent). It was (57 percent) for patients whose HIV-infection was of relatively shorter duration (less than 4 years) than (43 percent)those of longer duration (5 years and above; OR=1.7, CI 95 percent = 1.1-3.5). The age group (18-40 years) was more likely to screen positive for psychological morbidity (58.3 percent vs. 41.7 percent, OR=2.4, CI 95 percent) , than the age group (41-75 years). On the other hand, Christians were more likely than Muslims (55 percent vs. 45 percent, OR=1.5, CI 95 percent =1.1-3.) to be distressed. For married patients with partners it was 20 percent and for singles 30 percent; for the widowed (12 percent) and divorced (38 percent). At the level of tribal/ethnic groups, it was 13 percent for Ibos, 22 percent for Yoruba's, 27 percent for Hausas and 38 percent for all the other minority tribes put together.

Conclusion and Significance: The study has been able to identify the presence of psychological morbidity among HIV-infected persons as high and analyze the socio-demographic factors associated with it as significant. Periodic screening of HIV-infected persons for psychological morbidity and psychosocial intervention was recommended.

Biography

Obiageli Helen Ezeh, is a senior lecturer, in the Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, Nigeria, where she teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate medical students. She has been engaged in teaching, supervision and research for over two decades, and has published extensively in her chosen field of Behavioral/Social Medicine. She is happily married with children.

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