

Poster 18

Prevalence and characteristics of emotional distress and neurocognitive impairment in people living with HIV in Huambo/ Angola

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Abstract

Background: As life expectancy for people living with HIV (PLWH) increases, there's a growing acknowledgment of the crucial need to address their psychological and neurocognitive well-being [1,2]. **Objective:** This study aims to determine the prevalence of emotional distress and neurocognitive impairment in PLWH receiving care at a primary HIV center. **Methods:** 204 participants were assessed through the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale to evaluate emotional distress, anxiety, and depression, while the Mini-Mental State Examination was utilized to assess neurocognitive functioning. **Results:** 62.7% of the participants exhibit clinically significant levels of emotional distress, with 62.7% and 53.2% experiencing significant levels of anxiety and depression, respectively. Furthermore, 58.3% demonstrate impairment in global neurocognitive functioning. Notably, participants reporting emotional distress tend to have lower levels of education and monthly income. Factors such as gender, limited daily access to food, and potable water are associated with an increased risk of distress. Participants displaying neurocognitive impairments tend to be older, have fewer years of formal education, exhibit depressive symptoms, and have been living with HIV for an extended period. **Conclusions:** These findings underscore the high prevalence of emotional distress among PLWH and highlight the significance of factors such as education, income, and access to necessities like food and clean water. Consequently, it is imperative that public health policy makers develop and implement mental health services within HIV centers to address these critical concerns.

Keywords: psychosocial; depression; anxiety

Acknowledgments

This research received no external funding.

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