

HIV/AIDS, STDs and STIs

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Burden and risk factors for late antiretroviral therapy initiation in a rural HIV clinic in Kilifi, Kenya

Margaret Nassim Jahangir¹, Helen Latham², Clara Agutu², Amin Hassan², Antony Etyang² and James Berkley²

¹Kilifi County Hospital, Kenya

²KEMRI/Wellcome Trust, Kenya

Background: Despite scale up of antiretroviral therapy (ART) in sub-Saharan Africa, patients continue to initiate ART at an advanced stage of HIV infection, leading to poor outcomes.

Method: A retrospective analysis of routinely collected data from the HIV clinic at Kilifi County Hospital was done. Adults (≥ 15 years) initiated ART during 2008-2013 were included. The primary outcome was late ART initiation, defined as a baseline CD4 T-cell count of ≤ 100 cells/ μL at ART initiation. Logistic regression was used to describe risk factors of late ART initiation.

Results: Overall, 1112 (female, $n=790$ [71.0%]; mean age, 37.5 [SD, 10.3] years) individuals were initiated ART during 2008-2013. The mean CD4 count at initiation was 211 [SD, 212]. Nearly a third ($n=346$ [31.1%]) initiated ART late. In multivariate analyses, male gender (Adjusted Odds Ratio, [95% C.I.], p -value: 1.5 [1.1-2.1] $p=0.014$), WHO Staging (stage IV vs. stage I; 4.6 [2.3-8.9], $p<0.001$), severe malnutrition (BMI <16 vs. BMI >18.5 ; 4.9 [3.0-7.8], $p<0.001$) and pre-ART duration (<6 months vs. >12 months: 2.7 [1.8-4.1] $p<0.001$) were associated with late ART initiation.

Conclusion: Findings show that about 1/3 of patients are initiating ART late. Patients who initiated ART <6 months after enrolment were more likely to have advanced HIV infection, suggesting that the clinic is succeeding in initiating ART rapidly but failing to catch patients early for enrolment into care. Men are particularly at risk and more needs to be done. Findings also emphasize use of malnutrition and advanced clinical staging as indicators to target sick patients for ART initiation, rather than waiting for CD4 testing.

Biography

Margaret Nassim Jahangir is a Clinician working with the Kenyan Ministry of Health. She serves as an In-Charge of the HIV Clinic. She has over five years' experience in HIV/AIDS management and runs a mentorship program in the hospital. She has obtained her Diploma in Clinical Medicine and Surgery from KMTC, Mombasa. She is the Founder of Connect to Retain C.B.O, a community based organization that promote the wellbeing of youths infected with HIV in Kilifi County, Kenya. She is an alumnus of the Mandela Washington fellowship from Tulane University, Louisiana state, a flagship program by the president of United State of America.

Knasim06@yahoo.com

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