

2nd International Conference on **HIV/AIDS, STDs, & STIs**

October 27-29, 2014 Embassy Suites Las Vegas, USA

Role of support groups in management of depression & improving the adherence to ART among people living with HIV/AIDS in coastal South India

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Introduction: Depression is the most frequently observed psychiatric disorder among HIV/AIDS patients. It interferes with all aspects of living and may have a severe negative impact on quality of life. An HIV positive diagnosis is a life changing event and may induce shock, a sense of helplessness, denial, and occasional self-blame. Support groups for PLWHA's help with support, care and treatment and in advocacy to tackle stigma. The present study was carried out to find the prevalence of depression among HIV positives and Role of support groups in its management.

Methodology: The cross sectional study was carried out among 100 PLHIV aged between 18 to 65 years. Depression was assessed using Becks Depression Inventory, and the data was collected using a pretested semi structured preformed, after obtaining written informed consent. The Data was analyzed using SPSS version 11.5, statistical test CHI-SQUARE was used and P less than 0.05 taken as significant.

Results: HIV positive people who participated in the study were residing at urban area (59%), majority of them were primary school educated and daily wagers, and 52% of them were married. 64% of the study participants were depressed and majority of the depressed were not belonging to any support groups, 60% of the participants in the support group opined that the groups helped them to adhere to ART.

Conclusion: This study showed that belonging to a support group may be of assistance in preventing depression. It is therefore recommended that routine psychiatric screening of patients should be done at HIV clinics with referrals to appropriate services as necessary.

Biography

Unnikrishnan Bhaskaran is presently working as Professor and Head of Community Medicine, Kasturba Medical College (Manipal University), Mangalore and Dy. Director of Student Affairs, Manipal University. He is a member of Manipal University Ethics Committee and also the external member of Ethics committee of Institute of Applied Dermatology, also the member of Cochrane Infectious disease and HIV/AIDS group. He has published more than 100 articles including two systematic reviews in peer reviewed indexed journals. He is the Chief Mentor as well as member of Satellite Centre of Cochrane Public Health group.

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