

High Perceived Stigma among People Living with HIV/AIDS in a Resource Limited Setting in Western Ethiopia: The Effect of Depression and Low Social Support

Background: Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is only one part of a successful range of care among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Stigma and low social support are emerging issues worsening the success of ART for PLWHA. This study thus aimed to investigate the level of perceived stigma among PLWHA.

Methods: An institution-based cross-sectional study was conducted in Nekemte, western Ethiopia. A multivariable logistic regression model was used to identify associations between perceived stigma and low social support, depression, and other potential predictor variables using SPSS version 24.0 and adjusted odds ratios (AORs), considering statistical significance at $p<0.05$. **Results:** A total of 418 study participants were included in the study, with a response rate of 100%. About 48.6% of PLWHA had experienced perceived stigma, and more than two-fifths had poor social support. The following factors were associated with perceived stigma among PLWHA: age (18–29 years) (AOR=4.88, 95% CI:1.76–13.5), female sex (AOR=2.10, 95% CI 1.15–3.82), <12 months on ART (AOR=2.63, 95% CI 1.09–6.34), depression (AOR=1.86, 95%

CI 1.08–3.19), social support (poor: AOR=3.45, 95% CI 1.65–7.23; medium: AOR=2.22, 95%CI 1.09–4.54), and non-disclosure of HIV status (AOR=2.00, 95% CI 1.11–3.59).

Conclusion and Recommendation: The magnitude of perceived stigma among PLWHA was high, highlighting the importance of integrating social and mental health support within standard ART for PLWHA.

Keywords: stigma, social support, HIV/AIDS, Nekemte, Ethiopia

Biography

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