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Title:

Factors associated with failure of HIV patients to retain in care, 2013, Southern Taiwan

Abstract Text:

Background: Retaining HIV patients in care is crucial for disease management and control. Taiwan CDC has provided free HIV treatment since 1997, and the estimated rate of patients retention in care is suboptimal. We aimed to identify risk factors for non-retention in HIV care.

Methods: We conducted a matched case-control study using national HIV case management system. We enrolled patients aged ≥ 15 years, and living with HIV in Southern Taiwan, who were diagnosed and received HIV treatment before December 31, 2012. We ascertained their clinical visits in 2013, and collected data including demographics, HIV infection risk, last CD4 count and plasma viral load (PVL), HIV treatment adverse events in recent one year, AIDS status, and history of sexual transmitted diseases (STDs). We defined cases as HIV patients with non-retention in care (interval for return to scheduled medical visits ≥ 62 days). Each case was matched to one control by calendar year and age ± 5 years of HIV diagnosis, gender, and residence. We used conditional logistic regression to identify the associated factors.

Results: Total 63 (4%) patients had non-retention in 2013. Of 35 cases enrolled, 34 (97%) were male and median age was 27.5 years (range, 18–52). The median years from HIV treatment to non-retention was 4.5 (range, 0–13.2). Cases were more likely being intravenous drug users (IDUs) (OR 10.0, 95% CI 1.28-78.12) and having PVL > 200 copies/ mL before non-retention occurred (OR 15.0, 95% CI 1.98-113.51). Other variables were not significantly different.

Conclusions: IDUs and detectable viral load might be associated with non-retention in care. We recommend to identify barriers and improve linkage to care on these high risk groups.

Keywords: HIV infections, Matched Case-Control Studies, Anti-HIV Agents/therapeutic use, Taiwan

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