

The Relationship between Depression, HIV Stigma and Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy among Adult Patients Living with HIV at a Tertiary Hospital in Durban, South Africa: The Mediating Roles of Self-Efficacy and Social Support

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Abstract : Although numerous factors predicting adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) have been broadly studied on both regional and global level, up-to-date adherence of patients to ART remains an overarching, dynamic and multifaceted problem that needs to be investigated over time and across various contexts. There is a rarity of empirical data in the literature on interactive mechanisms by which psychosocial factors influence adherence to ART among PLWHA within the South African context. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the relationship between depression, HIV stigma, and adherence to ART among adult patients living with HIV at a tertiary hospital in Durban, South Africa, and the mediating roles of self-efficacy and social support. The health locus of control theory and the social support theory were the underlying theoretical frameworks for this study. Using a cross-sectional research design, a total of 201 male and female adult patients aged between 18-75 years receiving ART at a tertiary hospital in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal were sampled, using time location sampling (TLS). A self-administered questionnaire was employed to collect the data in this study. Data were analysed through SPSS version 27. Several statistical analyses were conducted in this study, namely univariate statistical analysis, correlational analysis, Pearson's chi-square analysis, cross-tabulation analysis, binary logistic regression analysis, and mediational analysis. Univariate analysis indicated that the sample mean age was 39.28 years (SD=12.115), while most participants were females 71.0% (n=142), never married 74.2% (n=147), and most were also secondary school educated 48.3% (n=97), as well as unemployed 65.7% (n=132). The prevalence rate of participants who had high adherence to ART was 53.7% (n=108), and 46.3% (n=93) of participants had low adherence to ART. Chi-square analysis revealed that employment status was the only statistically significant socio-demographic influence of adherence to ART in this study ($\chi^2(3) = 8.745$; $p < .033$). Chi-square analysis showed that there was a statistically significant difference found between depression and adherence to ART ($\chi^2(4) = 16.140$; $p < .003$), while between HIV stigma and adherence to ART, no statistically significant difference was found ($\chi^2(1) = .323$; $p > .570$). Binary logistic regression indicated that depression was statistically associated with adherence to ART (OR= .853; 95% CI, .789-.922, $P < .001$), while the association between self-efficacy and adherence to ART was statistically significant (OR= 1.04; 95% CI, 1.001- 1.078, $P < .045$) after controlling for the effect of depression. However, the findings showed that the effect of depression on adherence to ART was not significantly mediated by self-efficacy (Sobel test for indirect effect, $Z = 1.01$, $P > 0.31$). Binary logistic regression showed that the effect of HIV stigma on adherence to ART was not statistically significant (OR= .980; 95% CI, .937- 1.025, $P > .374$), but the effect of social support on adherence to ART was statistically significant, only after the effect of HIV stigma was controlled for (OR= 1.017; 95% CI, 1.000- 1.035, $P < .046$). This study promotes behavioral and social change effected through evidence-based interventions by emphasizing the need for additional research that investigates the interactive mechanisms by which psychosocial factors influence adherence to ART. Depression is a significant predictor of adherence to ART. Thus, to alleviate the psychosocial impact of depression on adherence to ART, effective interventions must be devised, along with special consideration of self-efficacy and social support. Therefore, this study is helpful in informing and effecting change in health policy and healthcare services through its findings

Keywords : ART adherence, depression, HIV/AIDS, PLWHA

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