

## Factors Associated with Non-Adherence to Antiretroviral Treatment among HIV Infected Patients in Ukraine

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**Abstract :** The study aimed to assess the level of adherence to anti retroviral therapy (ART) and to examine the relationship between adherence and risk behavior factor (drug use) among patients infected with HIV. The patients with newly diagnosed or established HIV infection under follow-up at the Sumskij Regional Centre for AIDS Prevention in Ukraine were eligible for this study. Medical records were used to measure the patient's adherence to medication. Measurements were obtained at month 6 and at month 12 to calculate the number of medication omission during the past 30 days: (on a 2-point scale - once until three in a month - were considered adherent, three and more in a month - were considered non-adherent). Of the 50 study participants, 27 (54.0%) were men and 23 (46.0%) women. The mean age is 35.2 years (SD= 5.1). A majority of the patients (82.0%) is in the age group of 25-30 years. The main level of adherence was 74.0% and 66.0% at 6 and 12 months, respectively. The main routes of HIV transmission were drug injection among men 12 (44.4%) and sexual contact among women 11 (47.8%). Univariate analyses indicated that patients who had lower level of education were more likely to have been non-adherent at month 6- ( $X^2 = 5.1$ ,  $n=50$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and at month 12 ( $X^2 = 4.34$ ,  $n=50$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Multivariate tests showed that only age (OR= 1.163 [95% CI 0.98-1.370]) was significant independent predictor of treatment adherence, while gender, education, employment status were not predictive for the risk of developing non-compliance. There was not a significant interaction between non-adherence and intravenous drug use. Consistent with these findings, younger people were more likely to have missed a dose of their medication because they had a greater sense of invulnerability than older patients. The study indicates that the socio demographic characteristic should be taken into an account in the future research regarding adherence in the case of HIV infection. If the patient anti retroviral adherence can be improved by qualitatively better medical care in all regions of the Ukraine, behavioral changes in the population can to be expected in the long term.

**Keywords :** HIV, antiretroviral therapy, adherence, Ukraine, Eastern Europe

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