

COVID-19 in individuals with HTLV-1 infection in Rio de Janeiro

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Support: Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do estado do Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ)

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Background: Human T-cell lymphotropic virus-1 (HTLV-1) is cause of infection in 5 to 10 million individuals in the world, with more than 800 thousand infected in Brazil. This retrovirus is associated with a higher occurrence of coinfections. In the last two years, there are over 275 million reports of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) worldwide. The impact of COVID-19 on the people living with HTLV-1 is still unknown. Therefore, we evaluated the risk factors associated with COVID-19 and its repercussions in individuals infected with HTLV-1 at a tertiary Hospital in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Methods: This is a retrospective study based on a structured questionnaire applied to HTLV-1 infected individuals, seen from January 2020 to August 2021. The variables age, sex, comorbidity/risk factors, vaccination and outcome of COVID-19 infection were analyzed (t-test and chi-square). In addition, the clinical features of post-COVID-19 syndrome were also investigated.

Results: A total of 42 out 106 HTLV-1 infected individuals were included in the study, 64% women, with a mean±SD age of 58±15 years. Of these, 15 (36%) were asymptomatic HTLV-1 carriers and 27(64%), diagnosed as HTLV-1 associated myelopathy (HAM). In total, 14/42 (33%) had COVID-19. Individuals with co-infection had a higher frequency of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (28.6% vs 0%), anxiety (64.3% vs 10.7%) and without vaccination (92.9% vs 28.6%) ($p<0.05$). Half of the patients with COVID-19 evolved to the moderate, 35.7% had mild form and 14.3% were asymptomatic. All were treated at home. The majority (78.57%) of patients with COVID-19 had post-recovery symptoms such as anosmia (45%), ageusia (45%) and worsening of anxiety (27.27%).

Conclusion: Our results show the importance of prioritizing vaccination and promoting not only physical care, but also mental health in HTLV-1 infected individuals.

Disclosure of Interest: None