

PREVALENCE OF HIV INDICATOR CONDITIONS IN LATE PRESENTING PATIENTS WITH HIV: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR DIAGNOSIS?

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Background: Late presentation, resulting in delay to commencement of antiretroviral therapy, leads to higher risk of mortality, non-AIDS events, HIV transmission and higher costs of care. In the EACS guidelines HIV testing is cost-effective when the undiagnosed HIV prevalence in a specific population with an indicator condition is greater than 0.1%. We looked at our population of late presenters over a fourteen year period (2000-2014) to determine whether testing when presenting with HIV indicator conditions in earlier years would have led to more timely HIV diagnosis.

Methods: The medical records of patients presenting with late diagnosis of HIV (CD4<350) within the Monash Health system between 2000 and 2014 were assessed for any EACS listed indicator condition in their prior medical history that represented a missed opportunity for earlier diagnosis. In addition, previous serological testing for hepatitis B and C without a previous HIV test was analysed by looking at the pathology database.

Results: After excluding patients with no data and patients <18 years old, 26 (42.6%) of 61 patients with late presentation of HIV had at least one, 16 (26.2%) had 2 or more and 8 (13.1%) had three or more previous indicator condition/s which would have strongly recommend HIV testing under the EACS guideline. The most common indicator conditions were: unexplained loss of weight (16.4%), herpes zoster (11.4%), thrombocytopenia or leukopenia (9.8%), oral or oesophageal candidiasis (8.2%), community acquired pneumonia (6.6%) and sexually transmitted infection (4.9%). Thirteen of the 26 patients (50%) had HIV indicator conditions that were diagnosed at least 12 months before HIV diagnosis.

Conclusion: Patients diagnosed with late-presenting HIV often had an HIV indicator condition prior to diagnosis, presenting a missed opportunity for diagnosis. There could be benefit in applying the EACS testing guidelines for indicator conditions in the Australian context.