

'LOOKING AFTER THE SURVIVORS' THE HEALTH OF A COHORT OF LONG TERM HIV PATIENTS 25 YEARS ON

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Background:

Patients with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection have higher rates of cardiovascular disease, metabolic disorders and some malignancies than their uninfected peers.

Aim:

To survey the health of a South Australian cohort of long term HIV patients, who had been diagnosed with HIV prior to the availability of combination antiretroviral therapy (cART) in 1997.

Methods:

Data from 88 patients was collected retrospectively across four domains: demographics, HIV history, antiretroviral medication and medical co-morbidity.

Results:

There were high rates of cardiovascular risk factors, in particular active smoking, dyslipidaemia and diabetes mellitus, which translated into a high rate of Ischaemic Heart Disease and Cerebrovascular Accidents. A large proportion of the patients suffered Depression and cognitive impairment. Approximately one fifth of the cohort had been diagnosed with a malignancy, with anal cancer being the most prevalent. Many patients had experienced permanent toxicity from antiretroviral therapy.

Conclusions:

This study showed high rates of 'non-HIV morbidity' in a group of long term HIV patients in South Australia. Clinicians should aggressively modify cardiovascular risk factors, ensure appropriate immunisations, monitor mental health and consider targeted malignancy screening in these patients. A robust clinical infrastructure and multidisciplinary team is required to facilitate the complex care needs of long term HIV patients.

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