

## Gender dimensions in HIV/AIDS: A cross sectional study in a tertiary care hospital

Ramesh. K, Ramya K, Ranjitha Kulkarni, Meenal Sharma, Tanvi Bhardwaj, Vibha Goswami

Vijayanagara Institute Of Medical Sciences

E-mail: meenalsharma2343@gmail.com

### Abstract

HIV continues to spread rapidly, it is the 4th biggest killer in the world (after heart disease, stroke and respiratory diseases). Across the world, in many early cases male homosexuals and i.v. drug abusers were concentrated but as the epidemic has spread there has been progressive shift towards heterosexual transmission and increasing HIV infection rates and deaths in females. The age patterns of infection are significantly different for the two sexes. Beyond the statistics of sex based differences in infection rates, there are profound differences in the underlying causes and consequences of HIV/AIDS infections in male and female reflecting differences in biology, sexual behaviour, social attitudes and pressures, economic power and vulnerability. It is for these reasons that HIV/AIDS is inherently a gender based issue and should be addressed effectively. HIV/AIDS will only be conquered when the effort to achieve gender equality is successful.

### Methods

#### *Study setting*

ART Centre, VIMS, Bellary, Karnataka.

#### *Study period*

March 15, 2012 to June 15, 2012.

#### *Study design*

Hospital based cross sectional study. Study subjects : HIV patients on ART treatment attending ART Centre VIMS. Exclusion criteria : Seriously ill patients, Patients who did not give their consent and children. Sample size : 250. Sampling technique : Non probability purposive sampling technique. Method of data collection : Data was collected using a predesigned semistructured questionnaire by interview technique. Data analysis : Data was analysed in SPSS 17 using proportion, mean, standard deviation and chi-square test. Ethical consideration : Permission was taken with the respective authorities of the institute and before interviewing patients a written informed consent was taken.

### Results

Total study subjects were 250, comprising 41.2% of males, 57.6% of females and 1.2% of transgenders. The mean age of study subjects is 35.6±1.3 years. Sociodemographic characteristics revealed 52% illiterate, 22% unemployed, 10.8% unmarried and 29.2% were widow/widowers. Unprotected sex with spouse is a common mode of transmission found among 49.2% of study subjects. 50.8% of study subjects' spouse were positive for HIV and among them for 60.8%, unprotected sex was the mode of transmission. Gender differences showed that 49.5% of males were infected through unprotected sex with sex workers whereas, 73.8% of females contracted AIDS through their spouses.

### Conclusion

There was a significant difference for education status, marital status, mode of transmission, knowledge, attitude and practices between males and females.