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Correlates of depression in ART adherence among the youths in Lilongwe, Malawi**Mary Carolyne Msefula***Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Malawi*

Despite collaborative efforts to improve mental health services among youths living with HIV (YLHIVs) aged 15–24, evidence shows that many suffer from depression. We established the correlates of depression and how it affects ART adherence. Structured questionnaires, a Patient Health Questionnaire 9 depression scale assessment, in-depth interviews, and Electronic Medical Record reviews were conducted at the Lighthouse Trust Martin Preus Centre (MPC) ART clinic in Lilongwe from April 2021 to October 2022. A total of 303 YLHIVs aged 15–24 were on ART, and 7 key informants were recruited. Bivariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses were performed using STATA V14.1. A thematic content analysis was used for qualitative data. Forty-six per cent of recruits were male, and fifty-four per cent were female. Seventy-one per cent were aged 20–24, and twenty-nine per cent were aged 15–19. Twenty-three per cent of the YLHIVs had depression symptoms, of whom seventy-nine per cent were aged 20–24 years. Twenty-two per cent had an unsuppressed viral load (non-adherent). Sixty-seven per cent of non-adherent participants were aged 20–24. There was no factor associated with ART non-adherence. Source of income ($p = 0.003$), alcohol consumption ($p = 0.010$), and sexual behavior ($p = 0.014$) were associated with depression. Sexual behavior was statistically significantly associated with depression ($p = 0.024$). The themes were a lack of basic needs, a lack of privacy, psychological trauma, incomplete disclosure, a shortage of psychosocial providers, and a knowledge deficit of ART providers to screen for depression. This study shows that depression is considerably high among YLHIVs in Malawi and linked to ART non-adherence. Strengthening mental health training for providers and routinely screening YLHIVs for depression would help in the early identification and management of depression, thereby improving ART adherence.

Biography

I am a highly motivated and detailed focused Global health implementation scientist with nursing background committed to promote effective and efficient utilization of health resources through evidence based interventions integrated in the global world and adapting policies to promote and strengthen health systems across the global world.