

Sexual Behaviors and Associated Factors among Men Living with HIV in Istanbul, Turkey

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INTRODUCTION

Although the incidence of HIV has decreased over the years according to unaids data, there is a remarkable increase in new cases in Central Asia and Eastern Europe, including our country [1]. In order to control epidemic, it is very important to determine the risk factors specific to the region. We aimed to determine sexual orientation, marital status, risky sexual behaviors and related factors of male individuals living with HIV.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in a training and research hospital in the centre of Istanbul where a large number of PLHIV were admitted. Between January 2015 and September 2018, 830 naïve HIV-infected patients applied to our HIV outpatient clinic. One hundred thirteen male living with HIV who questioned completely about their marital status, condom use, number of partners in the last two years and changes in sexual behaviors after diagnosis were included in the study. Demographic data and anamnesis findings of the cases were obtained retrospectively from the patient files. The sexual behavior characteristics and related factors of men living with HIV were analyzed.

RESULTS

The mean age of 113 HIV-positive male individuals was 34 ± 10.4 years. Men who have sex with men (MSM) consisted of 79 (70%) of all cases and this group was younger than heterosexuals, mostly single, had more sexual partners and had higher rates of condom use before diagnosis. Factors related to sexual orientation of PLHIV cases are shown in Table 1. Thirty five (31%) of all cases were married. Marital status and related factors are shown in Table 2. The marital status and related factors of MSM living with HIV are shown in Table 3. Table 4 presents the condom usage and associated factors of men living with HIV before diagnosis. A total of 111 (98.3%) who were questioned 3 months after the diagnosis stated that there was a change in their risky sexual behaviors, 60% of them were using condoms and 38% of them had no sexual contact.

CONCLUSION

In our study, two-thirds of the male cases consisted of MSM and MSM patients were younger than heterosexuals, mostly single, had more sexual partners, and had higher rates of condom use before diagnosis. Although MSM individuals are more likely to have multiple sex partners, they seem to be more conscious about prevention methods. The individuals no condom use were older, mostly married and heterosexual men and there is no significant association between the number of partners and condom use. These findings suggest that married, multi-partner, heterosexual men need more awareness than MSM on prevention methods. It is considered that it is important for our country to extend the prevention measures and disease education to the whole society rather than focusing only on risk groups. In our country, there is a dramatic increase in the incidence of HIV infection in recent years. Larger research to determine sexual behavior characteristics and related factors of cases may make a significant contribution to identify the causes of epidemic and target groups.

Table 1. Sexual orientation and associated factors among men living with HIV

	MSM (n=79)	HS (n=34)	P
Age(years), mean±SD	31.2±9.3	37.8±11.1	0.001
Marital Status, n (%)			
-Married	15 (19.0)	20 (58.8)	<0.001
-Single	64 (81.0)	14 (41.2)	
Number of partners, n (%)			
-1	0 (0.0)	9 (26.5)	<0.001
-2-5	17 (21.5)	10 (29.4)	
->5	51 (64.6)	8 (23.5)	
Condom use, n (%)			
-Yes	11 (13.9)	3 (8.8)	0,10
-Sometimes	51 (64.6)	14 (41.2)	
-Never	17 (21.5)	17 (50)	
Sexual behavior changes after diagnosis, n (%)			
-Condom use	51 (64.6)	17 (50)	
-Never sexual contact	26 (32.9)	17 (50)	0.17
-None	2 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	

Table 2. Marital status and associated risk factors among men living with HIV

	Married (n=35)	Single (n=78)	P
Sexual orientation, n (%)			
-MSM	15 (42.9)	64 (82.1)	<0.001
-HS	20 (57.1)	14 (17.9)	
Number of partners, n (%)			
-1	8 (27.6)	1 (1.5)	<0.001
-2-5	10 (34.5)	17 (25.8)	
->5	11 (37.9)	48 (72.7)	
Condom use, n (%)			
-Yes	4 (11.4)	10 (12.8)	<0.001
-Sometimes	11 (31.4)	54 (69.2)	
-Never	20 (57.1)	14 (17.9)	
Sexual behavior changes after diagnosis, n (%)			
-Condom use	19 (55.3)	49 (62.8)	
-Never sexual contact	16 (45.7)	27 (34.6)	0.30
-None	0 (0.0)	2 (2.5)	

Table 3. Marital status and associated factors among MSM living with HIV

	Married (n=15)	MSMSingle (n=64)	MSMP
Age(years), mean±SD	41.3±11.3	28.9±7.01	<0.001
Number of partners, n (%)			
-1	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
-2_5	3 (20)	14 (21.8)	1.00
->5	9 (60)	42 (65.6)	
HIV status of partner, n (%)			
- unknown	7 (46.7)	61 (93.3)	<0.001
- known	8 (53.3)	3 (4.7)	
Condom use, n (%)			
-Yes	2 (13.3)	9 (14.1)	
-Sometimes	8 (53.3)	43 (67.2)	0.45
-Never	5(33.3)	12 (18.8)	
Sexual behavior changes after diagnosis, n (%)			
-Condom use	8 (53.3)	43 (67.1)	
-Never sexual contact	7 (46.7)	19 (29.6)	0.23
-None	0 (0.0)	2 (0.31)	

Table 4. Condom use before diagnosis and associated factors among men living with HIV

	Condom use		P
	Yes/Sometimes (n=79)	Never (n=34)	
Age(years), mean±SD	30.9±8.7	38.5±11.8	<0.001
Sexual orientation, n (%)			
-MSM	62 (78.5)	17 (50)	0.002
-HS	17 (21.5)	17 (50)	
Marital Status, n (%)			
-Married	15 (19)	20 (58.8)	<0.001
-Single	64 (81)	14 (41.2)	
Number of partners, n (%)			
-1	5	4	
-2-5	17	10	0.13
->5	47	12	

REFERENCES

- [1] The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The gap report Geneva. Geneva: UNAIDS, <https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2019/2019-UNAIDS-data>