

ANXIETY AMONG PEOPLE NEWLY DIAGNOSED WITH HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS INFECTION IN TURKEY

Nazim Yildiz¹, Omer Faruk Demirel², Hanife Saglam³, Ibrahim Balcioglu², Zafer Habip⁴, Banu Tufan Kocak⁵, Nesrin Gareayaghi⁶ and Bekir Sami Kocazeybek⁴

¹Bulanık Public Hospital Clinic of Psychiatry, Mus; ²Department of Psychiatry, Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, ³Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, ⁴Department of Medical Microbiology, Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Istanbul; ⁵T.C. Health Ministry Erenkoy Mental Health and Neurology Training and Research Hospital, Istanbul; ⁶Istanbul Sisli Hamidiye Etfal Training and Research Hospital, Blood Center, University of Health Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract. The psychological response to being told a person has human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection has not been studied in Turkey. In this study, we aimed to determine the level of anxiety experienced by subjects in Turkey newly diagnosed with HIV infection in order to determine if this group should be considered for mental health support. Study subjects were those aged >18 years who were newly diagnosed with having HIV infection at the Cerrahpaşa Medical Faculty, Turkey during June 2015-June 2016. Exclusion criteria were those with a history of psychosis, bipolar disorders or mental retardation. Each subject was examined using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) which is used in clinical settings to diagnose anxiety and to distinguish it from depressive syndromes and includes two distinguished / independent subscales: I and II (also known as Form-X and Y). These subscales were examined to determine if there was an association between these subscores and a variety of sociodemographic variables. A total of 70 subjects were included in the study, 89% male. The mean (range) age of subjects was 35 (20-72) years. The mean STAI-I score [\pm standard deviation (SD)] was 52 (\pm 10) and the mean STAI-II score (\pm SD) was 43 (\pm 9), where a score \leq 36 was considered an absence of anxiety, 37-42 was mild anxiety and \geq 43 was considered a high level of anxiety and $>$ 60 was considered to need to see a mental health professional. We found no correlation between studied demographics and the STAI-I and STAI-II scores. To summarise, the diagnosis of having an HIV infection resulted in a severe level of anxiety but only 16% to the level of needing to see a mental health professional. We found no demographics factors significantly associated with anxiety level among study subjects. Further studies are needed to determine if there are factors that can reduce this level of anxiety and how to determine easily which subjects may need mental health care.

Keywords: STAI, anxiety, HIV, AIDS

Correspondence: Dr Bekir S Kocazeybek, Department of Medical Microbiology, Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa, Cerrahpaşa Street, 34098 Istanbul, Turkey.
Tel:+90 212 414 30 00 / 22417; E-mail: bzeybek@istanbul.edu.tr