



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS, HIV/AIDS

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT PATIENTS WHO ARE LOST TO FOLLOW UP FROM ANTI RETROVIRAL TREATMENT(ART) PROGRAMME AND REASONS FOR IT- A STUDY AT CENTRAL KARNATAKA, SOUTH INDIA.

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Introduction: Defaulting from Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) possesses serious consequences to the patient as well on the public health. Especially those patients who are Lost to Follow Up (LFU) require special attention.

Objectives: To study the characteristics of adult patients who were lost to follow up and to determine the reason for the same.

Materials and Methods: The data was collected from an ART clinic between January 2017 and March 2017 in a tertiary referral hospital. 85 adult patients aged more than 18 years were lost to follow up i.e. did not come back to collect ART medication for at-least 3 months from last visit. Such patients' charts at the clinic were reviewed. The patients were traced initially over telephone, if could not be contacted then visiting their place of residence and were asked the reasons for non-attendance.

Results: Out of 85 adult lost for follow-up (LFU) patients- 45 (52.94%) belonged to age group of 31-45 yrs, 48(56.47%) were men, 38(44.70%) had received no formal education, 55(64.70%) were from rural areas and 56(65.88%) were unemployed. The reasons for their loss to follow up were- 7 (8.23%) had died. The major reasons for default among the 78 alive patients were financial constraints in 28(32.94%), loss of faith in treatment in 19(22.35%), drug related factors in 12(14.11%), transferred out to another ART clinic in 9(10.58%) and untraceable in 10(11.76%).

Conclusion: The major reasons for defaulting were social factors unrelated to treatment regimen. Hence it is prudent to consider these social factors for ensuring adherence to ART, and thus prevent emergence and transmission of drug-resistant virus strains.

