The association of HIV/AIDS treatment side effects with health status, work productivity, and resource use.

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Abstract

Due to stable incidence and improved survival rates, there are an increasing number of patients living with HIV/AIDS in the USA. Although highly effective, current antiretroviral therapies are associated with a variety of side effects. The role side effects play on health outcomes has not been fully examined. The current study assessed the association of medication side effects with (1) self-assessed health status; (2) work productivity and activity impairment; and (3) healthcare resource utilization. Data were from a cross-sectional patient-reported survey fielded in the USA using a dual methodology of Internet and paper questionnaires. A total of 953 patients living with HIV/AIDS who were currently taking a medication for their condition were included in the analyses. The most frequent side effects reported by patients were fatigue (70.72%), diarrhea (62.96%), insomnia (58.97%), dizziness (52.78%), neuropathy (52.68%), joint pain (52.36%), nausea (51.63%), and abdominal pain (50.37%). The presence of each side effect was associated with reduced self-assessed health status, increased productivity loss, increased activity impairment, and increased healthcare resource use. Controlling for CD4 cell counts in regression modeling did little to diminish the impact of side effects. Although not all side effects were associated with all outcomes, every side effect was associated with worse health status, some measure of increased work productivity loss, and/or some measure of increased healthcare resource use. Patients are living longer with HIV and, therefore, spending a greater length of time on treatment. The results of the current study suggest that many of these patients are experiencing a wide array of side effects from these therapies. These side effects have demonstrated a profound association with self-assessed health, work productivity, and healthcare resource use. Improved management of these side effects or development of treatments with a better side effect profile may have a substantial humanistic and economic benefit.

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