Antiretroviral therapy.

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Editorial Note

Antiretroviral therapy refers to any HIV treatment that uses a combination of two or more drugs. A healthcare provider may choose to prescribe a combination of three or more drugs to improve the treatment's chance of success. HIV specifically affects nutritional status by increasing energy requirements, reducing food intake, and adversely affecting nutrient absorption and metabolism. Asymptomatic and symptomatic adults have energy requirements increase by 10% and 30% respectively to maintain body weight and physical activity. Malnutrition and HIV/AIDS compound one another. To assess nutritional status and associated factor among adult patients on Zewditu memorial hospital.

Institutional based cross sectional survey was conducted in Zewditu memorial hospital among adult ART user. Sample of 287 ART users were interviewed using interviewer administered questionnaire. The study population was selected by systematic random sampling method. SPSS version 21 statistical software was used to enter and analyze the data. This study revealed that 32.8% of adult ART users in Zewditu Memorial Hospital were under nourished (BMI<18.5kg/m2). Respondents with the age group of 34-41 years were 73.3% less likely to be undernourished as compared to the age group of 18-25. T- Stage II patients were 2.2 times more likely to be under nourished as compared to WHO stage I patients. AOR 2.199(1.085-4.456) P-value 0.029. Similarly T- Stage III patients were 16 times more likely to be undernourished as compared to stage I patients. AOR 16.075(5.542-46.632) P-value 0.0001. Those with high food diversity were found to be 74.7% less likely to be under nourished as compared to respondents found with low food diversity. Under nutrition prevalence was found to be high. Age, clinical stage and food diversity were the predictors for malnutrition. Therefore nutritional support and counseling must be considered.

Antiretroviral therapy has the following positive effects on HIV:

• Stops it from multiplying in the blood

• Reduces viral load, which is the number of HIV copies in the blood

• Increases the number of CD4 cells, which are immune cells that HIV targets, to improve immune system function

• Slows down and prevents the development of stage 3 HIV, or AIDS

• Prevents transmission

• Reduces the severity of complications and increases survival rates

• Keeps virus counts low in the blood.

When prescribing antiretroviral therapy, healthcare providers typically use a regimen of three or more drugs for the best chances of lowering the amount of HIV in the body. A person can, however, talk to their healthcare provider about a single pill that contains several medications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), antiretroviral therapy can reduce viral load to such an extent that it is undetectable. This means that a person can no longer transmit the virus to another person, even via condomless sex.