

The association between taking HAART and hypertension.

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Background: The use of Highly Active Anti-retroviral Therapy (HAART) has improved the quality of life among people with HIV/AIDS, but there are concerns about its effect on hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases.

Objectives: In this study we sought to find out if HAART is associated with hypertension and to describe lifestyle and socio-demographic factors among people on pre-ART and HAART.

Methods: We conducted a cross sectional study of HIV infected patients initiated on HAART and pre-ART at Sithobela health centre.

Results: We enrolled a total of 410 participants, 205 in the ART group and 205 in the pre-ART group. The estimated prevalence of hypertension among those on ART was 14.2% [95% CI: 9.3-18.9] and 19% [95% CI: 13.6-24.4]

among pre-ART patients. There was no significant difference in the prevalence of hypertension between the two groups ($p=0.185$). However, after adjusting for age, marital status, level of education, stage of disease, smoking history, waist to hip ratio, occupation, income level, history of smoking and alcohol use, HAART was significantly associated with hypertension (AOR= 0.43 [95% CI: 0.23-0.83]). Patients who reported drinking alcohol were likely to be hypertensive (AOR 10.96 [95% CI: 2.36-50.92]). Smokers were 3 times more likely to be hypertensive compared to non-smokers but this association was found not to be statistically significant on multivariate analysis.

Conclusion: our study demonstrated a potential beneficial effect of HAART in reducing hypertension among HIV infected people in Sithobela, Swaziland.