IDENTIFICATION OF MOST PREVALENT SPECIES OF CANDIDA IN THE ORAL CAVITYOF HIV PATIENTS BEFORE AND DURING HAART

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Abstract

Background: The most common oral lesion in HIV patients even after advent of HAART is oral candidiasis (OC), despite the decrease in many lesions in the post HAART era. OC is commonly caused by C albicans, a commensal in the oral microbiota. However in the last decade, Non Candida AlbicanSpecies (NCAS) are evolving as pathogens with varied virulence, susceptibility to antifungal agents and are associated usually with <CD4 counts. Morbidity and risk associated with OC makes it important that species are identified.

Aim: To identify the most prevalent Candida species in 30 HIV patients before and during therapy.

Methodology: Whole saliva samples were obtained from 30 patients before initiation of HAART and during the therapy after a 6-8 months follow up. Samples were subjected to macroscopic and microscopic examination followed by morphological and biochemical tests (carbohydrate assimilation and fermentation tests).

Results: Most common clinical variant of candidiasis was pseudomembranous type. The oral Candida carriage rates in the pre and post HAART periods were 83.3% & 36.7%. NCAS were more common during both periods [pre HAART= NCAS-50%, C.albicans-33.3%; post HAART= NCAS-23.4%, C.albicans-13.3%]. C.tropicalis was the most common species isolated in both periods followed by C. albicans and C.glabrata [pre HAART= C.tropicalis (36.7%),}
C.albicans (33%) & C.glabrata (13.3%) and post HAART = C.tropicalis (16.7%) C.albicans (13.3%) & C.glabrata (6.7%). C.glabrata was found to be significantly associated with <CD4 counts. However the HAART regimen had no influence on Candida species isolated.

**Conclusion:** More longitudinal studies and large cohort with utilization of advanced techniques which can identify a wider range of species would further add to the current knowledge of candidiasis and aid in better clinical management.