ORAL MANIFESTATION IN SEROPOSITIVE HIV PEDIATRIC PATIENTS WITH HAART AND WITHOUT HAART

Abstract:

Introduction: Pediatric HIV infection is associated with a wide spectrum of oral lesions. Though the oral manifestations of HIV infection are similar in adults and children, they may vary in severity. Oral mucosal lesions are one of the earliest clinical indicators of HIV infection. The risk factors that influence the development of such oral manifestations include low CD4+ T cell count and lack of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). The introduction of HAART has decreased the prevalence of oral lesions. In India, studies related to the prevalence of oral lesions in children are few.

Aims and Objectives: The aim of the present study was to compare the prevalence of oral manifestations in HIV-positive children receiving HAART and who have never received HAART.

Materials and Methods: This was a cross-sectional study conducted at ART centre, Government General Hospital, Vijayawada, comprising 250 HIV seropositive pediatric patients with age range of 1-15 years in which Group-I comprised of 125 HIV positive children receiving HAART for a minimum period of 3 months (n=125) and Group-II consisted of 125 HIV positive children without prior history of anti-retroviral therapy (n=125). Diagnosis of oral lesions in the study sample was based on presumptive criteria established by the European Economic

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Community Clearinghouse on oral problems related to HIV infection. The data obtained was tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis.

**Results:** The overall prevalence of oral lesions observed in our study population was 34.66% (n=87), out of which 51% (n=44) of HIV positive children were on HAART and 49% (n=43) of HIV positive children were not on HAART. There was no statistically significant difference in prevalence of oral lesions between the children with and without HAART. Candidiasis and gingival/periodontal lesions were more in HIV positive children without HAART. Hyperpigmentation and ulcerations were significantly more in children receiving HAART. However, the prevalence of dental caries was same in both the groups.

**Conclusions:** We conclude that, although there were differences in the occurrences of oral manifestations in children with and without HAART, only in the case of viral lesions there was no statistically significant difference. However, a large study sample with the periodic follow up of the same subjects prior and after HAART would be beneficial.

**Key words:** children; HIV; AIDS; HAART; CD4; oral; candidiasis