

Retrospective audit of dietetic referrals to HIV specialist dietetic services in Sydney

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Background:

Despite advances in the management of HIV, there remains a high incidence of associated cardiometabolic comorbidities and increased chronic health issues associated with ageing and HIV. Diet and nutrition related behaviours are widely acknowledged to be factors in the prevention and treatment of chronic disease. Dietitians can play a critical role in the management of nutrition related comorbidities commonly observed among people living with HIV (PLHIV).

Methods:

A retrospective analysis of medical records for all HIV clients referred to two HIV Specialist Dietetic Services in Sydney was completed over a 12-month period (2022-2023). Non identifiable data was extracted and collated in the Quality Audit Reporting System (QARS) database; demographic details, referral source, reason for referral, duration of HIV infection, comorbidities, and nutrition-related assessment. Descriptive statistics were used to interpret the data.

Results:

A total of 245 referrals were received between May 2022 and April 2023. Over half of the clients were between the age 50-69 years and 89% were male. The referral was initiated by HIV specialists in 27% cases. The most common problems referred to a dietitian were related to overweight/obesity (31%), underweight/unintentional weight loss/malnutrition (25%), and high cholesterol (13%). Of the 208 of clients who were seen by dietitians, mean duration of HIV infection was 18 years. Medical and psychosocial comorbidities were common. Most common comorbidities were mental health issues (35%) and hyperlipidaemia (29%). Of those who had their body mass index recorded in the last six months 8% were underweight and 36% were either overweight or obese.

Conclusion:

Monitoring of referral patterns can assist with assessing strategies to align practice with evidence-based guidelines and enhance multidisciplinary collaboration. The role of dietitians in the multidisciplinary care for PLHIV has subsequently broadened beyond managing malnourishment and includes providing person-centred counselling to optimise diet quality and prevent chronic disease.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No interests to disclose.