

Author: Joachim Sackey

Co Author: Fang Fang Zhang, Beatrice Rogers (Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University), Christine Wanke (Tufts University School of Medicine, Tufts University)

Topic: Food and nutrition security

Title: Food insecurity and its association with depressive symptoms among people living with HIV in Accra, Ghana

Presentation Type: Poster

Introduction:

Ghana has about 230,000 adults living with HIV. Food insecurity is associated with poor HIV outcomes, poor nutritional status and depression. The objective of this study was to evaluate the association between food insecurity and depressive symptoms in PLWH in Accra. Our hypothesis was that higher food insecurity will be associated with more depressive symptoms.

Methods:

This is a baseline cross-sectional analysis of an on-going prospective cohort study. We recruited 152 adult PLWH from 6 hospitals in Accra. Food insecurity was assessed using the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS). Depressive symptoms were measured using the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression (CESD) scale (range; 0-60. Higher scores indicating greater depressive symptoms). Analysis of covariance was used to evaluate the association between food insecurity and depressive symptoms.

Results: Among the 152 participants (mean age=39.9 yrs; 84% female), 26.5% were overweight (BMI=25-29 kg/m²) and 20.5% obese (BMI ≥30 kg/m²). Over a third (36.2%) were classified severely food insecure by the HFIAS. Median CESD score was 18 (IQR; 14-22). Sixty-six percent of this population were at higher risk of clinical depression using the CESD cutoff score of ≥16. Food secure PLWH had a CESD score 5.3 points lower than those severely food insecure ($p < 0.0001$) after multivariable adjustments.

Conclusion:

Food secure PLWH had less depressive symptoms compared to those severely food insecure. Interventions to improve food security among PLWH in this region may have a positive impact on their mental health.

Grant Funding Source: Brown/Tufts/Miriam Fogarty AIDS International Training and Research Program (2D43TW000237).