

HIV and oral health in the era of antiretroviral therapy

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Abstract

Oral health problems can generate considerable negative effects on the quality of life of patients living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Almost 90% of PLWHA experience at least one oral manifestation and 32-46% will have at least one major HIV-related oral health problem. Oral manifestations are often the first indicator of symptoms and disease progression. In addition, a large number of PLWHA do not have access to regular dental care. Lack of providers, finances, stigma, and awareness of the importance of oral health are all factors that affect access. Poor oral health can impact food intake and nutrition, leading to poor absorptions of medications, leaving PLWHA susceptible to progression of the disease. The relationship between oral health diseases and other systemic disease has also been well established. As part of the goal to decrease the transmission of HIV through viral suppression, antiretroviral therapy (ART) remains one of the major tools used by health professionals. The number and severity of oral manifestations have decreased with antiretroviral therapy, but there has been a shift in the type of oral manifestations which may be attributed to the improvement in immunity gained by therapy and the increased longevity of patients on ART. This presentation will serve to update health professionals on the shift in oral condition in the era of ART and the presence and early treatment of oral lesions. In addition, there will be focus on the role the dental professional plays in the overall health and viral suppression of PLWHA.

Biography

Mark Schweizer has completed his Doctor of Dental Surgery from the University of Maryland, College of Dental Medicine and a Master's in Public Health from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He is the Director of development and special projects at Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine and Dental Director, Southeast AIDS Education and Training Center. He has lectured nationally on oral health and HIV and has developed, implemented and evaluated multiple oral health HIV programs across the State of Florida. He has been providing oral health care to HIV/AIDS patients for over 25 years.

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