

Dettaglio abstract

N. pgm: P 296

Title: Quality of pre- and post-COVID-19 healthcare: the point of view of women living with HIV

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Social and behavioural science, marginalized groups, community aspects and community surveys

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Abstract

Background: Due to the COVID19 pandemic, the offer of health services had to change either to ensure continuity in the doctor-patient relationship or to respond to the care needs of people living with HIV, both being fundamental to their physical and psychological health. This is particularly true for WLWH who can require care due to pregnancy, menopause, and depressive symptoms.

Methods: An anonymous nationwide web survey created by the Community Advisory Board of Icona has been spread through the centers of its network and through the CBVTC websites and social media. 73 questions exploring several aspects including socio-demographic characteristics, HIV-related health data, information on disclosure of HIV, perceptions of stigma and self-stigma, and female specific health aspect such as pregnancy, menopause, contraception and cancer's screenings. The online RedCap survey has been conducted from Jun22 to Mar23.

Results: The sample comprises 210 WLWH, median age 52 (IQR 29-62), medium-high cultural level, mainly living in northern Italian towns, and economically independent in 63.3% of cases. 7.9% initiated their HIV treatment during the pandemic. In most cases, HIV diagnosis was made more than ten years earlier, with an average of 19 years. 78.6% of WLWH reported a 'good' or 'optimal' opinion on the healthcare received in their center. For 80.9% of cases, the judgment on their clinical center has not changed after the pandemic (only 1.3% reported an improvement). There was a similar judgment in the quality of services provided after the pandemic (no critical issues 60.4% pre-COVID19 period and 57.6% post-COVID19 period, $p=0.257$). 10.9% pre- and 12.8% post-COVID19 reported a difficulty of being heard ($p=0.366$). 4.5% decided to change center after the pandemic - Table 1.

Conclusions: The examined women sample shows a relatively stable relationship with reference clinical center during pre-and post COVID19. They maintain the chance to meet the doctor, with low concerns in schedule the appointment. Satisfaction derives from the possibility of reaching health figures on the phone; few problems were reported in the time devoted to the visit, and waiting times, while half of the women reported critical issues with respect to drug procurement, regardless of the pandemic period. The sample may not be representative of the reality of Italian WLWH, as they have a long history of HIV and thus are more confident with health care personnel. Main respondents were women followed in larger

centers where critical issues due to pandemic may have been more mitigated. The present analysis does not reveal major critical issues in the utilization of the health care system by WLWH with an old HIV diagnosis in the pandemic period.

Table 1 - Specific aspects of health care service according with pandemic periods

	Pre-COVID-19	Post-COVID-19	McNemar's Test p-value
Difficulty in meeting your doctor	12.6%	16.3%	0.180
Problems with schedules	8.2%	8.2%	1.000
Medications pick up	8.2%	8.3%	1.000
Specialist visits	13.5%	15.4%	0.439
Difficulty in reaching doctors/healthcare professionals by phone	12.2%	11.5%	0.781
Too short visits	12.2%	11.5%	0.763
Long waiting times	13.5%	11.5%	0.438