

CURRENT PSYCHO-SOCIAL AND PREVENTION NEEDS IN A GROUP OF MSM LIVING WITH HIV IN SPAIN

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Objectives

- 1.- To identify and describe the current needs related to health, psychosocial aspects and HIV prevention in a group of MSM living with HIV.
- 2.- To determine whether there have been changes in those needs since the appearance of HIV/AIDS.

Methodology

A qualitative study was carried out with 78 men (aged 27-65): 35 in individual interviews and 43 in 5 discussion groups in the cities of Barcelona, Madrid and Palma de Mallorca. The sampling criteria was that eighteen months had passed after a HIV diagnosis was established.

Results

Participants revealed many needs of all kinds. These demands mainly have to do with the need for psychological counselling services, emotional support groups and information about the evolution of the infection and treatment, especially for those newly diagnosed. These demands express emotional needs that must be addressed in a confidential and safe space. The participants ask for cosmetic surgery to be included as part of social security coverage. This surgery would help to disguise the presence of lipodystrophy (visible signs of infection which can stigmatize the person). Other demands relate to social-labour issues such as: obtaining permits for their medical visits without revealing HIV status, reducing working hours, adequate pensions and early retirement to allow a better quality of life.

Conclusions

Several of the identified needs do not differ from those recognized when the HIV epidemic appeared. This leads us to believe that despite the efforts of interventions in this group, their needs are not being covered adequately. New and better strategies must be implemented to reach this population and to pay attention to their needs. This would improve the quality of both the psychological and general health of seropositive MSM and therefore secondary prevention will be more effective.

Key words: HIV-positive MSM, needs, psychological well-being; HIV prevention

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