Impact of Social Isolation in HIV-Positive Individuals During a Pandemic

Date: July 9, 2021
Time: 8:55 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Place: Remote

Abstract

Problem: The global pandemic of COVID-19 caused concern for immunocompromised individuals. The purpose of this quality improvement initiative was to assess the impact of social isolation on feelings of loneliness, depression, and social isolation experiences in HIV-positive individuals residing in a long-term care facility.

Methods: A mixed-method convergent design with a purposeful sample of HIV-positive adult residents residing in a long-term care facility was utilized. An evaluation of loneliness using the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness Scale (Version 3) and depression using the Patient Health Questionnaire-8 (PHQ-8) were completed. Personal experiences were also assessed with five predetermined open-ended interview questions.

Results: There were 15 HIV-positive adult residents (N = 15) who completed the interview. Mean scores for PHQ-8 and UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) were 8 (SD=6.96) and 47 (SD=10.02), respectively. There were 11 participants (73%) whose PHQ-8 scores indicated depression. Of those, three participants (20%) had PHQ-8 scores above nine and required immediate referral. A moderately strong relationship occurred between depression and loneliness; the more depressed the individual was likely to be (r_s = 0.56, p = .030, 95% CI [0.07, 0.83]). Major themes were: depression, anxiety, loneliness, stress, and loss of control.

Implications for Practice: The impact of social isolation on feelings of loneliness and depression were varied. The moderately strong relationship between depression and loneliness, indicated strategies for loneliness reduction could impact depression in HIV-positive individuals living in a long-term care facility.