

DENTAL EDUCATION

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Salivary and gustatory functions in HIV seropositives with HAART (highly active antiretroviral therapy) and non- HAART therapy

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Aim: The aim of the study is to assess, compare and correlate CD4 count with the salivary flow rate and gustatory functions in HIV positive individuals on HAART (Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy) and non-HAART therapy.

Materials & Methods: Total 60 HIV seropositives, 30 with HAART regimen (Group I) and 30 without HAART regimen (Group II) were included in this study. Salivary flow rate was measured using Schirmer's test. The length of wetting of Schirmer test strip is measure of salivary flow rate. Gustatory functions were assessed by four freshly prepared tastant solutions of sucrose (sweet), sodium chloride (NaCl, salty), citric acid (sour) and quinine sulphate (bitter) in five concentration levels. The detection threshold of taste was measured on a scale of 1–5 for all concentrations of each taste solution.

Results: The mean salivary flow rate decreased in both Group I and Group II over a period of six months. It has decreased more in Group I as compared to Group II. The Pearson co-relation analysis showed a significant inverse co-relation between changes in salty taste score and salivary flow rate in Group I ($r=-0.59$, $p<0.001$) however it showed a positive co-relation in Group II ($r=0.45$, $p<0.05$). The changes in other gustatory variables showed no significant co-relation ($p>0.05$) with CD4 count and salivary flow rate in both the groups.

Conclusions: Reduction in salivary flow rate and gustatory dysfunction are imperative concern for HIV seropositives on HAART regimen. Hence along with routine oral health appraisal in HIV seropositives, salivary flow rate and taste dysfunction should be integral part of patient assessment.

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