

"U=U": Awareness and impact on the quality of life in PWH: experience of a Greek HIV unit

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BACKGROUND

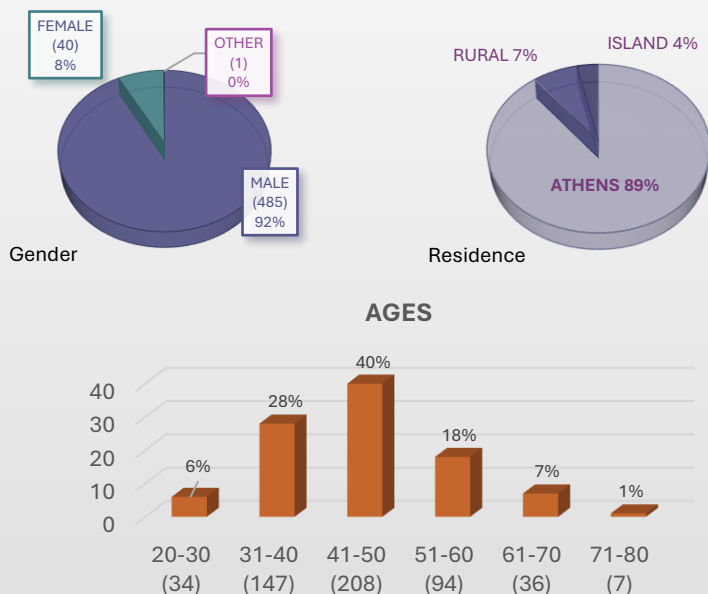
"Undetectable equals Untransmittable" (U=U), is a message designed to communicate the proven fact that people living with HIV (PWH) cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners if their viral load is undetectable. This empowering message could lead to better health outcomes, improvement of quality of life and reduction of HIV-related stigma. The aim of this study was to investigate the awareness of the U=U message among a cohort of PWH.

METHODS

This single-centre, cross-sectional study was conducted in December 2023. Patients followed in the HIV-outpatient clinic of ATTIKON University Hospital in Athens, Greece were asked to fill a questionnaire with 14 close-ended questions about their awareness regarding the "U=U" message, stigma related issues and a questionnaire regarding health related quality of life (HRQOL) (MOS-HIV). Demographics and data regarding HIV infection were collected.

RESULTS

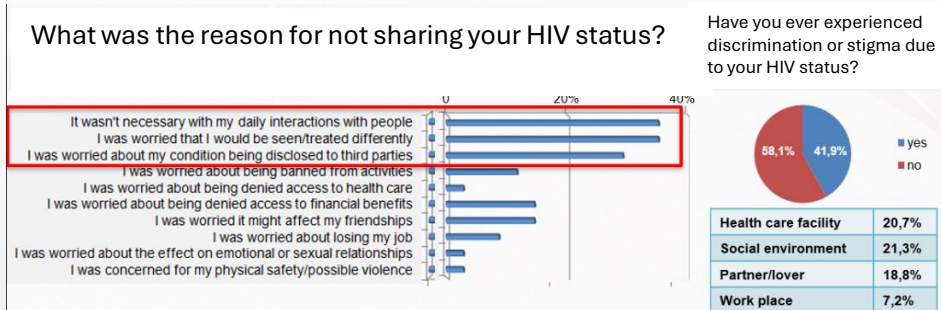
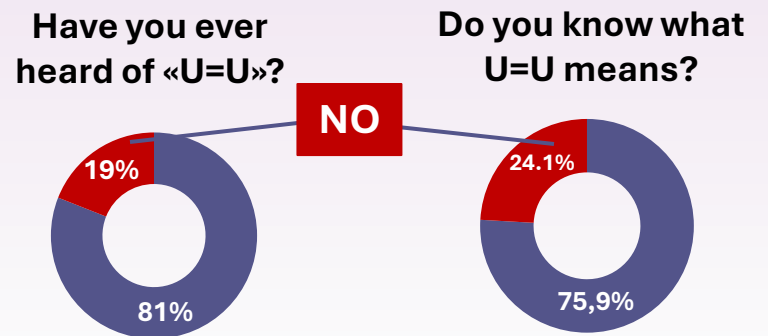
526 PWH were included in this preliminary analysis. 92% were male with mean age (\pm SD) 45 (\pm 10.4 years).



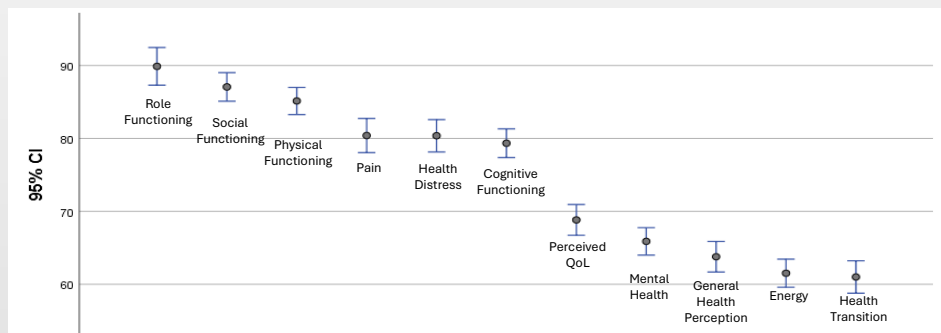
426/526 (81%) had heard of the U=U message but 24.1% of them were not aware of its meaning. 54.9% have heard of it from their health care professional (HCP), 29.88% through the social media, 18% through the mass media and 15.9% were informed by a friend or partner. 478/526 (92.3%) were aware that PWH cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners if their viral load is undetectable, but only 58.7% had discussed it in detail with their HCP. 81.2% and 76.8% reported improvement of their quality of life and their sex life respectively knowing the U=U message.

RESULTS (CONTINUED)

PWH aware of U=U were more likely to be MSM, younger and of a higher education level. No significant differences were seen in terms of age and gender. No significant association of the "U=U" message with HRQOL was observed, except for the domains of general health, physical functioning and emotional functioning. Finally, no correlation was seen between knowledge of U=U and adherence to medication.



The MOS-HIV Health Survey consists of 35 questions which assess 11 dimensions of HR-QOL



CONCLUSIONS

- ✓ Despite the relatively high awareness rates of the "U=U message", it is obvious that the message has not been delivered to everyone.
- ✓ It is primarily the duty of both HCP and the community to spread this knowledge that will improve the quality of life of PLWH.