

The pattern of hearing disorders in HIV positive patients on anti-retrovirals at Kenyatta National Hospital.

Abstract:

OBJECTIVES: To determine if patients on Anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) develop hearing impairment. DESIGN: The comprehensive care clinic (CCC), Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), Nairobi. SETTING: Case controlled study. SUBJECTS: Two hundred and seventy one human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) positive patients on ARVs were matched for age and sex with 273 HIV positive patients who were not on ARVs. RESULTS: Thirty four percent of HIV positive patients not on ARVs had a hearing loss compared to only 28% in patients who were on ARVs. sensorineural hearing loss was the most frequent hearing disorder in both groups. Majority of the patients had mild hearing loss and the higher frequencies were the most affected. There was a notable worsening of hearing loss with increase in age, but this was not statistically significant. It was noted that HIV positive patients hearing level worsened on starting ARVs but this improved after six months of ARV treatment. CONCLUSION: Prolonged usage of ARVs is not associated with decreased hearing function. The most common hearing loss found in patients on ARVs is sensorineural hearing loss (SNHL).