People With HIV Have a High Rate of PTSD

Researchers analyzed studies from around the world that looked at posttraumatic stress disorder in the HIV population.

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Globally, people with HIV have a high rate of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), aidsmap reports.

This finding comes from the first comprehensive systematic review and meta-analysis of studies assessing the rate of PTSD in the HIV population.

Publishing their findings in BMJ Open, researchers analyzed 38 such studies, including 21 from the United States and 11 from sub-Saharan Africa. For the most part, the studies were small. Two thirds of them had fewer than 300 participants, and just three had more than 1,000.

The average proportion of the study cohorts with PTSD was 28% across all the studies.

The results varied quite a bit, which may have been a by-product of variations in studies' methodologies. The prevalence of PTSD was 17% in the seven studies that systematically sampled patients at clinics, while the prevalence was 31% in the 20 studies that used convenience samples. In the one third of studies that assessed PTSD through a clinical interview, the prevalence was 22%, while in the remainder of the studies, which relied on a self-report questionnaire, the rate was 31%.

The PTSD prevalence was 35% among women, 33% among men who have sex with men and 20% among heterosexual men. Few studies, however, looked at men.

"PTSD among PLWH [people living with HIV] is common worldwide," the study authors concluded. "This review highlights that PTSD should be routinely screened for and that more effective prevention strategies and treatment packages targeting PTSD are needed in PLWH."

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

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