Clinical assessment of symptom-focused health-related quality of life in HIV/AIDS.

Webb A, Norton M.

Source

Association of Nurses in AIDS Care, Akron, Ohio, USA.

Abstract

The routine clinical evaluation of health-related quality of life (HRQOL) improves quality of care in patients with HIV/AIDS by effectively assessing and optimizing treatment outcomes, enhancing patient adherence, improving communication between patients and clinicians/nurses, and documenting changes in patients' health status over time. Existing HRQOL assessment tools may not be appropriate for this purpose, as they are designed for clinical trials and research, and exclude several aspects relevant to QOL in patients with HIV/AIDS in the clinical setting. Therefore, there is a need for a new, user-friendly, HIV-specific clinical assessment tool that briefly but effectively evaluates symptom-related HRQOL issues most relevant to patients with HIV/AIDS, including fatigue, depression, pain, nausea and vomiting, sleep disturbances, sexual dysfunction, and body image changes. This article describes the role of nurses in HRQOL assessment in HIV/AIDS, compares commonly used assessment tools, and evaluates the applicability of these tools for routine clinical use in this patient population.