

ABSTRACT

ILLNESS REPRESENTATION AND HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS RELATED TO SELF-CARE SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT IN PERSONS WITH HIV/AIDS

The purpose of this study, via secondary analysis, was to determine the relationships among sociodemographic characteristics, high-risk behaviors (e.g., injection drug use, alcohol use, high-risk sexual behaviors), self-reported illness representation (e.g., self-perceived symptom presence, intensity, and impact on daily life), and self-care management strategies in persons with HIV/AIDS. A descriptive correlational design was used to obtain information from 372 HIV-infected subjects in an outpatient clinic in Houston, Texas. Participants completed a sociodemographic data form, Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), Revised Sign and Symptom Check-List for HIV (SSC-HIV rev), and Self-Care Symptom Management for People Living with HIV/AIDS (SSM). Persons who engage in high-risk behaviors were more likely to use potentially self-destructive strategies to manage disease-initiated and medication-induced symptomatology. A variety of self-care measures were incorporated in order to manage commonly reported constitutional symptoms associated with HIV/AIDS. The majority of the client-initiated strategies were perceived as being highly effective.

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