SUMMARY

It has been documented in several literatures that the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity is significantly high among patients suffering from chronic and life-threatening medical conditions such as HIV/AIDS. Most studies investigating the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in this group of patients are from the developed countries.

The aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of depression and suicidality among patients with HIV/AIDS in Benin City.

In this study, 150 consecutive HIV/AIDS out-patients were sampled. They were matched for age, sex and level of education by a control group of 150 persons selected from the general population. The Schedule for Clinical Assessment in Neuropsychiatry (SCAN) was used to diagnose depression and Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was used to assess suicidal ideations and the severity of depression. Suicide attempt was assessed using a questionnaire.

The rate and severity of depression were significantly higher among HIV/AIDS patients compared to the general population (29.3% vs 7.3%) [x^2 =24.245. df=1, p=0.001]. The rates of suicidal ideations and suicide attempts were also significantly higher among HIV/AIDS patients compared to the general population: 34.7% vs 4.0% and 9.3% vs 1.3% respectively.

These findings stress the need for incorporating mental health services into the routine care of HIV/AIDS patients who now constitute about 4.4% of the Nigerian population.