

Description for the general public

Psychological well-being among people living with HIV from a temporal perspective: macro – and micro-dynamics of changes

Significant advances in medical science cause that nowadays people suffering from many chronic diseases usually live longer. However, it does not mean that they become happier. Increasing number of authors mentioned the fact that the vast majority of chronically ill patients would choose shorter, but a more worthy and satisfying life compared to longer life with disease, but accompanied by great suffering

The main goal of this project is to examine determinants of changes in psychological well-being (PWB), as defined by the level of health related quality of life (HRQoL) and subjective well-being (SWB), among people living with HIV (PLWH) in a classical longitudinal design (macro-dynamics) accompanied with an innovative implementation of so called shortitudinal design, i.e. analysis of daily dairies (micro-dynamics). In this project, therefore, we focus on the analysis of determinants of psychological well-being conceptualized in a twofold manner, taking into account temporal aspects, personality variables, social support and coping strategies with an illness-related stress. The hypothesized model is based on the Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) model of stress and coping, with a clear distinction between dispositional antecedents (dimensions of personality), intermediate processes (coping and social support) and outcome variables (well-being: SWB and HRQoL). In this project, Lazarus and Folkman's model has been enriched by aforementioned diary methodology, which allows capturing how PLWH cope with chronic stress in an everyday life. In the light of the review of existing literature, such dairy studies have not been conducted among PLWH so far.

A final sample of 200 HIV+ individuals (i.e., after three repeated observations with six months intervals) is planned to participate in the realization of the first research task in this study. Participants will be filled questionnaires, such as WHO Quality of Life-BREF (WHOQOL-BREF), Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) together with the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS-X), NEO-FFI questionnaire, The Mini-Cope Inventory and Berlin Social Support Scales (BSSS). In parallel, diary studies will start for a subsample of the participants who after completing the aforementioned baseline measurement will agree to take part in the second research task. For five consecutive days, from Monday till Friday, each evening the patients will fill online time-stamped questionnaires, send via hyperlink to their emails boxes, to assess their daily emotional state, coping strategies and social support. A single evaluation will take about 10 minutes. A professional survey software dedicated to online measurements will be used to facilitate data collection.

Summing up, it is worth mentioning the potential benefits connected with this research project, which have both an epistemological and a practical nature. Firstly, our review of the existing literature leads us to believe that this proposal describes one of the first longitudinal studies with daily dairies to be conducted including such a wide and specific set of variables as determinants of psychological well-being among PLWH. Secondly, our so-far quite limited understanding of the role of subjective and social factors in psychological well-being among PLWH can, if developed, turn into a valuable source of information about the mental functioning of PLWH, as knowledge about psychological functioning of these patient groups is still very limited, especially in Poland. The research contained in this proposal can be especially useful for specialists dealing with psychological help PLWH and may be an adjunct to develop more effective methods of psychological counselling for PLWH. In the face of the difficulties medicine has with a completely successful treatment of PLWH, it seems that research, such as the one described in this proposal, can add to understanding of a complexity of inter-individual differences observed in their well-being. Finally, the project is conducted in a consortium between the Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw and the Faculty of Psychology, SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw. Thus, it promotes the development of inter-university cooperation.