

Effects of food supplementation and nutrition counseling on nutritional status of wasted HIV positive patients attending Maragua Comprehensive Care Clinic (CCC)
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Background: Although nutrition supplementation is emerging as an important aspect in the management of patients with HIV/AIDS even those taking ARTs, its effects on the nutritional status and changes in body composition is unclear but remains an option albeit it's expensive to maintain. With majority SSA population living in resource poor settings, those infected face food and nutritional insecurity and inadequate nutrition knowledge, hence unable to meet their nutrient requirement. This study investigated the effects of food supplementation and nutrition counseling on the nutritional status and body composition of wasted PLWHA in a resource poor setting in Kenya.

Methods: The study adopted a quasi-experimental study design. Effects of nutrition counseling (NC) alone versus nutrition counseling and food supplementation (FD+NC) on wasted HIV infected patients and receiving ART were compared. 204 patients attending Maragua CCC were recruited and followed up for 3 months. 110 patients were randomized into the FD+NC while 94 into the NC group.

Results: There were no statistical differences between the two study groups in regard to nutritional status, socio-economic and demographic characteristics. At end of month 3, there was a mean difference (increase) in weight of 5.44kg SD 0.74, while BMI had a mean change of 1.89Kg/m² SD 0.30 in FD+NC and in the NC group, mean increased of weight by 5.06Kg SD 0.55 and BMI by 1.91 Kg/m² SD0.23. There was no significant difference in body composition between the two groups (fat, p=0.972; water, p=0.537; LBM p=0.576). Improvements in food consumption patterns with net increase in consumption of all the food groups were observed.

Conclusions Both nutrition supplementation and nutritional counseling greatly reduces AIDS defining wasting. Both interventions improve the nutritional status of patients and should remain an integral part of HIV/AIDS care and management. Emphasis should be given to nutrition counseling which can be used as the first choice as it is a cheaper option to providers.

Key words: Food supplementation, PLWHA, Nutrition status, CCC

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