Objective: The purpose was to assess factors potentially affecting care pharmacists provide to HIV/AIDS patients including comfort level, confidence, education, experience, professional competence, continuity of care and patient-provider relationship between pharmacists and HIV-infected patients. Methods: A 24-item questionnaire assessed the constructs of this study. Surveys were distributed from October 2009 to April 2010 to pharmacists in Alabama with varying levels of experience treating HIV-infected patients. Chi-square tests determined whether relationships existed between responses, consisting of how often respondents reported treating HIV-infected patients, amount of HIV education respondents had, participants’ confidence with HIV/AIDS knowledge and comfort level counseling HIV-infected patients about their medications. Results: Thirty-three percent of the pharmacists cared for HIV-infected patients on a monthly basis, yet 86% do not feel very confident with their HIV/AIDS knowledge. Forty-four percent were not comfortable counseling patients on antiretroviral medications, and 77% would feel more comfortable with more education. Significant, positive relationships were revealed concerning how often respondents treat HIV-infected patients and their comfort level counseling them (r=0.208, p<0.05). Similar relationships pertaining to the amount of education respondents had regarding HIV, how confident they are in their HIV/AIDS knowledge (r=0.205, p<0.05), and their comfort level counseling HIV-infected patients on their medications (r=0.312, p<0.01) were found. The time spent treating HIV-infected patients and the education respondents had pertaining to HIV/AIDS related to increased comfort levels concerning counseling patients on their medications. Conclusion: This research uncovered areas where pharmacists can improve care and treatment for HIV-infected patients. Increasing education on HIV/AIDS and treatment options may lead to increased comfort and confidence in therapeutic management. Through changes in pharmacists’ perspectives and abilities to care for their patients, *Margaret DAVIS PATE, PharmD. Pharmacy Practitioner. University of Alabama Hospital at Birmingham. Birmingham, AL (United States). Ami Teague SHELL, PharmD, BCPS, AAHIVE. Professor. McWhorter School of Pharmacy, Samford University. Birmingham, AL (United States). Sean R. KING, MS, PhD. Assistant Professor. Union University School of Pharmacy. Jackson, TN (United States). the patient-provider relationship could strengthen, potentially leading to improved medication compliance, enhanced overall health, and a better quality of life for HIV-infected patients.
Keywords
Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, Health Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice, Pharmacists, United States.