

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Adherence to ART among young adolescent continue to show limited information and yet consequences of non-adherence is posing significant public health challenge across developed and developing countries. Globally, less than half 43% of 2.1 million adolescents aged 10-19 years living with HIV received ART.

Main study objective: The general objective was to determine the factors affecting adherence to ART among children at Gulu Regional Referral Hospital.

Methodology: The study used a descriptive cross-sectional study by design that utilized quantitative method of data collection. Sample size was determined using Cochran's (1963) formula. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaire. The data collected was, entered into Microsoft Excel 2010, and exported into SPSS for analysis. The findings were presented into pie-charts, graphs and tables.

Results: The mean age of care takers of the children was 36 years (± 9.6). Most of the caretakers were aged between 29-39 (45.1%) and the caretakers were females and more than half 131(63.6%) were married. The level of adherence to ART was 93.2% and non-adherence was 6.8% among children aged 8-16 years. Bivariate analysis using chi-square test showed that relationship with care taker ($p=0.007$) with more adherence among children under care of fathers, frequency of ARV administration ($p=0.001$) and schedules for drug administration ($p=0.001$), average monthly income ($p=0.027$) statistically significant difference with adherence to ART. Using Unadjusted regression analysis, caretakers giving medication twice a day were 9.78 times of having ART adherent children (Unadjusted Odd Ratios=9.78 95%CI: 2.128-44.946, $p=0.003$). Adherence to ART was 12.14 times higher for children who received drugs in the afternoon (UOR=12.14 95%CI: 2.566-57.452, $p=0.002^*$). Children who were administered drug in the morning and evening were 5.17 times more likely to adhere to ART (UOR=5.17 95%CI: 0.693-38.621 $p=0.109$).

Conclusion: Level of adherence was high at 93.2%.None adherence was most among females. Relationship of care taker, giving ART twice a day, giving ARV in the afternoon, morning and evening, average monthly income of 100,000-150,000 and 200,000 Uganda shillings significantly contributed to adherence to ART among children aged 8-16 years. Promote good care irrespective of the relationship of the care taker to child, administer drugs at right frequency and schedule at all times. Encourage income generation activities and other employment to facilitate the costs involved in accessing and using ART services.