Perceived Stress and Cigarette Smoking among HIV Infected and Uninfected Cocaine Users.

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Stress is associated with poor mental and physical health outcomes, and cigarette smoking can negatively impact disease progression in HIV+ individuals. The objective of the current study was to examine the association between perceived stress and cigarette smoking in HIV+ cocaine users (HIV+COC+). We hypothesized that perceived stress and depression will predict cigarette smoking in HIV+COC+ users. The sample was 75 participants aged 36.18 ± 9.5 years, recruited from the local community. Depression was assessed using the Center Epidemiological Scale for Depression. Stress was evaluated using the Perceived Stress Scale. The Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV was used to examine cocaine use and self-reported smoking status was obtained for cigarette smoking. A series of generalized linear models were run examining potential differences in smoking behaviors and stress among the four different groups, HIV+COC+, HIV-infected non-cocaine users (HIV+COC-), HIV-uninfected cocaine users (HIV-
COC+) and HIV-uninfected non-cocaine users (HIV\textsuperscript{COC−}). Approximately half the participants (51\%) were current smokers and more than half (65 \%) were former smokers. Results show that current smoking was the highest in HIV\textsuperscript{−} COC\textsuperscript{+} (82\%), followed by HIV\textsuperscript{+} COC\textsuperscript{+} (74\%), and then the HIV\textsuperscript{+} COC\textsuperscript{−}(35\%) and HIV\textsuperscript{COC−} (30\%) users. Neither HIV status ($\chi^2(1) = 0.68, p = .41$), perceived stress ($\chi^2(1) = 0.28, p = .596$), nor depressive symptomatology ($\chi^2(1) = 1.18, p = .278$) were related to smoking. Only the factor for cocaine use predicted likelihood of smoking ($\chi^2(1) = 18.7, p < .001$). Non-cocaine users were approximately 95.1\% less likely to smoke than cocaine users, controlling for all other variables. Overall, cocaine use was the strongest predictor of cigarette smoking and the number of cigarettes smoked per day. Findings suggest the importance of including smoking cessation plans when developing interventions for cocaine use among HIV infected individuals.

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