Antiretroviral Therapy Concealment, Adherence, and Preferences in People with HIV

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Main Findings

Nearly **half** of people with HIV (PWH) in the Florida Cohort Study endorsed antiretroviral therapy (ART) concealment behaviors.

ART concealment was associated with at-risk drinking, depression, incomplete disclosure to/lack of a close social network, and suboptimal ART adherence.

Background

- PWH on ART must adhere to prescribed regimens to maintain viral suppression.
- Many PWH experience HIV-related stigma, which leads them to conceal their HIV status from others.
- It is unclear how ART concealment to prevent inadvertent disclosure of HIV status impacts ART adherence.

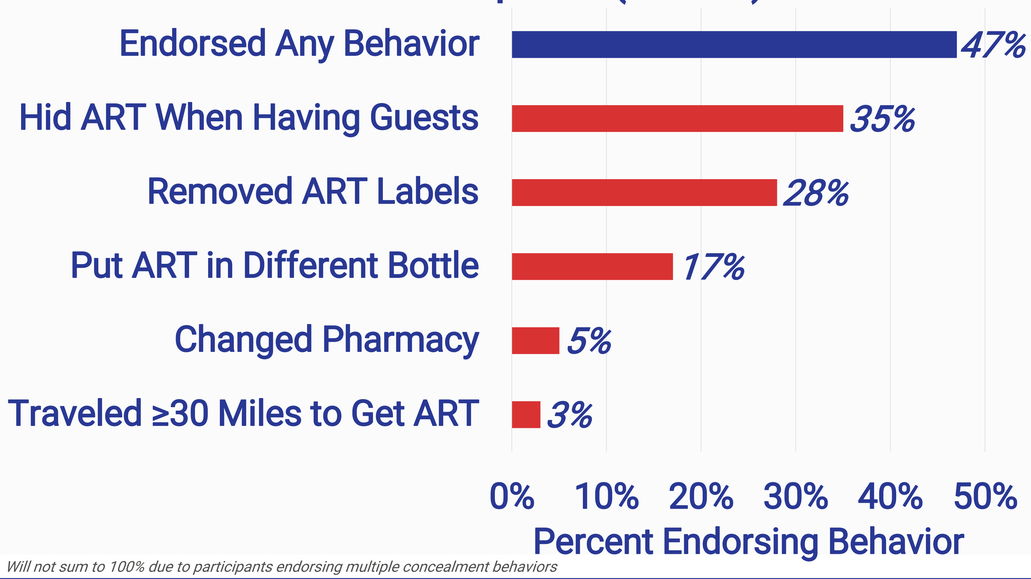
Study Aims

1. Characterize ART concealment behaviors and associated factors among a cohort of PWH.
2. Assess associations between ART concealment and ART adherence or interest in long-acting injectable (LAI) ART.

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Results

ART Concealment Behaviors Endorsed by Florida Cohort Participants (N=406)



Will not sum to 100% due to participants endorsing multiple concealment behaviors

- ART concealment was associated with:
  - At-risk drinking (aOR 2.5, 95% CI 1.4-4.6)
  - Depressive symptoms (aOR 2.2, 95% CI 1.1-4.2)
  - Incomplete disclosure to close social network (aOR 3.1, 95% CI 1.9-5.0)
  - Not having a social network (aOR 3.3, 95% CI 1.4-7.8)
  - ≥85% ART adherence (aOR 0.3, 95% CI 0.1-0.9)
- ART concealment was **not** associated with LAI preference.

Methods

- **406 adult Floridian PWH (62% aged 50+, 60% male, 42% non-Hispanic Black)** were enrolled between October 2020-Present.
- **Participants were asked about ART adherence (optimal ≥85%)** in the past 30 days, engagement in **ART concealment behaviors** to hide their HIV status in the past year (hiding ART bottles, removing prescription labels, storing ART in another bottle, changing their pharmacy, or traveling ≥30 miles to obtain ART), **and LAI preference**.
- Participant disclosure of HIV status to social network was categorized as one of the following: having no network, incomplete disclosure, or complete disclosure.
- **Simple and multivariable logistic regression models** (adjusting for age, alcohol use, injection drug use, depression, and anxiety) assessed differences between those with and without ART concealment and associations with adherence and LAI preference.

Conclusions

- ART concealment was common and associated with reduced likelihood of optimal ART adherence.
- PWH may prefer receiving ART through mechanisms that ensure privacy.
- Future research can examine the impact of ART concealment on HIV outcomes like viral suppression and develop interventions and care models to improve adherence among PWH concerned about HIV status disclosure.

