

Longitudinal changes in anxiety and depression among Ukrainian older people with HIV (OPWH) during the Covid-19 pandemic

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- Among OPWH living in Kyiv, depressive & anxiety symptoms remained highly prevalent but did not increase during Covid-19.
- OPWH with a substance use disorder had increased levels of anxiety symptoms during the early phase of the pandemic.

Background

- COVID-19 amplified mental health challenges especially anxiety and depression, yet empirical data about the experiences of older people with HIV (OPWH; aged ≥ 50 yo) is limited
- Ukraine has over 360,000 people living with HIV, of whom $\sim 25\%$ are OPWH – and the proportion of OPWH is growing
- Ukraine imposed a stringent lockdown in March 2020 and urged PWH to 'shelter-in-place' in response to rising Covid-19 case numbers

Objective

- We sought to explore longitudinally how Covid-19 impacted the mental health of OPWH living in Ukraine.

Methods

- We surveyed OPWH living in Kyiv, Ukraine by phone between April-June 2020 (Wave 1) and again from December 2020-February 2021 (Wave 2).
- The primary *outcomes* were:
 1. Depressive symptoms: scores on the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) ≥ 5
 2. Anxiety symptoms: scores on Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 scale (GAD-7) ≥ 5
- Participants PHQ-9 and GAD-7 scores were compared between Wave 1 and 2 to assess for changes in depressive and anxiety symptoms
- *Covariates*: age, gender, history of a substance use disorder (SUD) and/or alcohol use disorder (AUD), living situation (living alone, not living alone), and employment.
- Differences were assessed with chi-square and t-tests.

Results

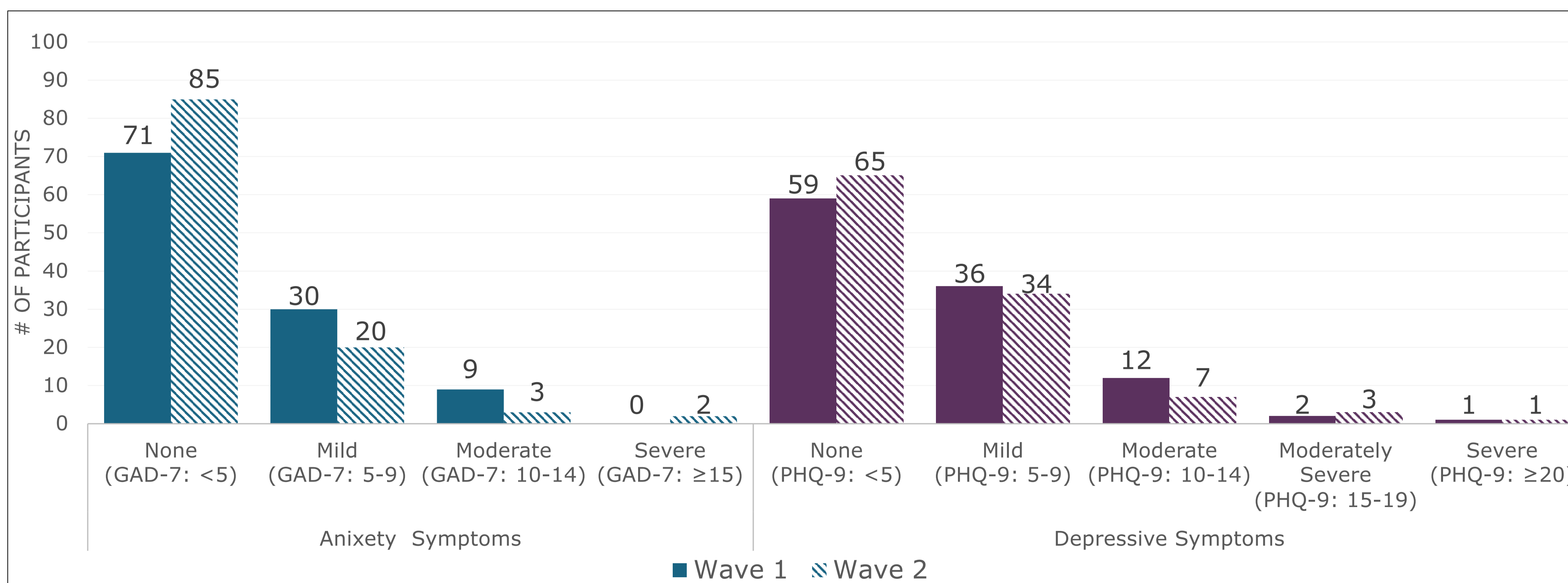
- Of the 110 OPWH (89.4% of 123 OPWH who completed Wave 1) who completed both Wave 1 and Wave 2 surveys, 55 (50.9%) were women and average age was 55.4y (SD=6.45). Nearly half (47.3%) had a history of a SUD and/or AUD.
- During Wave 1, 51 participants (46.4%) reported symptoms of depression and 39 (35.5%) reported symptoms of anxiety.
- During Wave 2, the prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms was 40.9% and 22.7%
- Gender and living situation were not associated with changes in depressive or anxiety symptoms.

Table 1: Characteristics of OPWH living in Ukraine during the Covid-19 pandemic (n=110)

Demographics	Women	56 (50.9%)	Social Support	<2 supports at 1 st wave	18 (16.4%)
	Men	54 (49.1%)		<2 supports at 2 nd wave	14 (12.7%)
	Age, mean (SD)	55.4 (6.45)		Covid-19 Exposure	Have been diagnosed with Covid-19
Household	Live alone	30 (27.3%)	Family/friend with Covid-19		64 (58.2%)
	Live with others	80 (72.7%)	Major Stressors during Covid-19 Lockdown	Fear of Covid-19	58 (52.7%)
Employment	Employed full-time	38 (34.5%)		Inflation, rising prices	37 (33.6%)
	Employed part-time	18 (16.4%)		No or few savings	32 (29.1%)
Drug Use	Drug use in the prior 6 months	5 (4.5%)		Change to daily social life	30 (27.3%)
	Addiction	History of an Alcohol Use Disorder or Substance Use Disorder		52 (47.3%)	Loved ones' health
Health		≥ 1 Comorbidity associated with severe Covid-19 ¹		69 (62.7%)	Movement restriction
					Receiving healthcare

1. CVD, HTN, diabetes, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease, liver disease, cancer

Figure 1: Anxiety & Depression Levels among OPWH during Wave 1 & Wave 2



Results Cont.

Depression

- At the individual level, 27 (24.5%) had decreased symptoms; 16 (14.5%) had increased symptoms
- Individuals without full time employment were *more likely to have increased depressive symptoms* than individuals with full time employment ($p=0.01$)

Anxiety

- At the individual level, 25 (22.7%) had decreased symptoms and 11 (10.0%) had increased symptoms
- Younger age ($p<0.01$) and a history of an AUD or SUD ($p=0.01$) was associated with *increased anxiety symptoms*

Limitations

- This analysis occurred prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine; further investigation (currently ongoing) will be needed to understand the current mental health of OPWH

Conclusions

- Among OPWH in Kyiv, prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms have remained substantial but have not increased during Covid-19
- OPWH with comorbid addiction experienced increased anxiety symptoms
- Targeted interventions to address mental health, such as peer-support, are warranted