

Methodological consideration may influence results of some HIV-related articles to be more precise and applicable in practice

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Dear editor

A noteworthy article published in this journal [1] and many other investigations conducted identified the association between absolute CD4 counts and their association with presence or absence of oral manifestations. In the absence of other clinical or laboratory information, particularly in developing countries where CD4 counts due to financial limitations are not routinely done, these findings have great clinically applications.

This issue was of such importance that we reassessed it for several times. This article revealed that lower CD4 counts were significantly associated with presence of oral manifestations. In table 6, the authors evaluated the association of each oral manifestation with CD4 counts using Mann–Whitney *U* test. In the mentioned article and other similar ones, it seems that some kind of mixture of data occurred in such a way that CD4 counts of people who have specific oral manifestation did not compare with the baseline of who had no oral manifestations, but did so with other subjects, regardless of whether they had other oral lesions or not. As we know, those people with oral lesions

had a decreased number of CD4 counts; with this comparison, unintentionally, the differences between the two groups diminished. In our opinion, this kind of misclassification of data may affect the result in such a manner that the odds ratio will be more conservative and causes decrease in the power of study, as it unintentionally occurred in this article. It therefore seems better that, along with such comparison, a comparison between CD4 counts for each oral manifestation, with patients having no oral manifestation as a baseline group, is performed. It is with great likelihood that this consideration may lead to different results that are more precise and applicable in clinical practice.

Reference

1. Sharma G, Pai KM, Setty S, Ramapuram JT, Nagpal A (2009) Oral manifestations as predictors of immune suppression in a HIV-/AIDS-infected population in south India. *Clin Oral Investig* 13:141–148

Comment on the article “Oral manifestations as predictors of immune suppression in a HIV-/AIDS-infected population in south India,”
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