

ABSTRACT

Tropical spastic paraparesis (TSP), a slowly progressive spinal cord disorder has gained much attention since the discovery of its cause, the retrovirus human T lymphotropic virus type I (HTLV-I), which is similar to the virus responsible for the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

This study was designed to determine the relationship between socio-demographic and psycho-social factors and the coping skills of TSP patients treated at the University Hospital of the West Indies during 1995.

The sample consisted of 45 patients who were identified by way of a face to face interview.

From the findings of the study it was seen that there was a relationship between family support, social status and social coping. Other socio-demographic and psycho-social factors such as age, sex, marital status and self esteem showed no relationship.

The study suggested the need for a team approach in the management of TSP patients aimed at bringing out the most adapted coping strategies of which the patient is capable.