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**Presentation Title: H-220 - Cryptococcal Meningitis in Patients with AIDS: Clinical Experience in a Tertiary care Teaching Hospital of Panama**

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Author(s): E. González, MD - Resident, A. B. Arauz, MD (Doctor of Medicine) - Attending Physician, A. Rodriguez-French, MD - Professor, Attending Physician; Hosp. Santo Tomás, Panama, Panama.

**Abstract:** Background: Cryptococcal meningitis is a most common cause of opportunistic infections in people living with HIV/AIDS and in developing countries persist to be an important cause of death, since Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART) is not universally available. Methods: Descriptive retrospective study was made for patients with Cryptococcal meningitis with AIDS admitted at Hospital Santo Tomás (Panama, Panama) during a five year period (Jan 2007 -Dec 2011). Results: Data for 28 patients (17 male, 11 female) were retrieved and analyzed. The mean age was 31.6 years and 36% of the patients were already in HAART at the moment of cryptococcal meningitis diagnosis, most of them with at least two month of therapy. The predominant clinical presentation included headache (96.4%) and vomiting (82.1%) and only a 42.9% presented with fever. Decreased glucose (96.4%) and a positive india ink (92.8%) were the main alterations of cerebrospinal fluid and half of them (57.1%) presented with an increased opening pressure. Only 8 out of 28 had a CD4+ count realized with all of them with less than 200 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> and five with less than 100 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>. All patients received amphotericin B as monotherapy since flucytosine is not available and the mean hospital stay was 22.6 days. The in-hospital mortality was of 50% and recurrence was observed in five patients, considering that only nine patients continued ambulatory follow-up receiving amphotericin B biweekly or weekly since oral fluconazole is not always affordable for patients. Conclusions: Cryptococcal meningitis persists to be an important cause of morbidity and mortality in panamenian population of people living with AIDS even with HAART being available. There must be implementation of strategies to prevent this opportunistic infection. Presentation Abstract