

Assessment Of Social Support for Elderly People Living with HIV And AIDS At WAMATA and Kairuki Hospital - Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Abstract

Among people living with HIV, 15% are elderly, aged 50 years and above. Elderly people who are living with HIV are likely to have special needs which are not adequately addressed. These include the need for emotional support, practical support and informational support and they are vital in facilitating preventive and treatment strategies. Due to the availability of ARV drugs, more PLHIV are now living longer than before. This study set out to explore the social support offered to the elderly PLHIV in Dar es Salaam with the aim of defining their needs in this regard with the aim of providing them with a better quality of life. The study design was qualitative case study method of 60 years and above PLHIV attending services at WAMATA and KH. Information was also obtained from 7 service providers in a focus group discussion. Clients were interviewed individually by using an interview guide of semi-structured questions. Secondary data was obtained from the same institutions. The results show that for the elderly PLHIV to adhere to ART they need sustainable nutrition and that PLHIV with social support live healthier and longer lives although stigma limits disclosure. In conclusion, practitioners and policy makers need to facilitate social support at family and community levels. Limitations include the qualitative approach with a small sample size and the likely possibility of participant saying what they think the researcher wants to hear in self-report. Future research may be encouraged to include more elderly PLHIV in quantitative research.