

Is care and support associated with preventive behaviour among people with HIV?

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Abstract

Care and support should play a critical role in assisting people who are HIV-positive to understand the need for prevention and to enable them to protect others. Differences in sexual risk reduction among 154 newly diagnosed HIV-positive individuals from semi-urban Tanzania were examined using a randomized control design, which assigned a control group to regular health services and an experimental group to enhanced care and support. Data were collected at baseline, three months and six months on self-reported sexual risk behaviours, disclosure of serostatus, reproductive health and psychosocial support. Over the six-month period, significant risk reduction occurred among both groups, with most of the behaviour change occurring during the first three months, e.g. 86 respondents (56%) reported condom use at last intercourse at 3 months compared with 24(16%) at baseline ($p = 0.05$). Extra care and support did not lead to increased risk reduction among the experimental group. The study population as a whole significantly changed their behaviour, suggesting that in the short term, learning one is HIV-positive has an impact on risk reduction.