

Loneliness and Secrecy: ART adherence in Maputo – the importance of Education and of Health Professionals

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Abstract

This study aims to explore socio-demographic characteristics of ART patients in the city of Maputo, including differences on age, gender and schooling level, on their family and health professionals support relationships, on their previous knowledge about HIV and ART, on their fear to be recognized as HIV and on the impact of the discrimination experiences on the ART adherence. The sample consists of 602 ART patients living in Maputo district, Mozambique, between 21 and 56 years old.

The findings reveal that most of the patients have never interrupted the treatment. More men than women reported doing it, warning us for the impact of male avoidance of the treatment and of the treatment appointments on compromising their life quality and expectancy. Those who have none support relationship or the health professionals as figures of support adhere more than those who have family, activists or friends as support relationships. Those who reported that have never interrupted the treatment have more previous knowledge about HIV and the treatment. Most of those who have interrupted the treatment have already been discriminated by nurses or friends. The majority of the participants did the test because were already feeling sick. All participants that did the test because were suspecting of the partner, have already interrupted the treatment, what calls attention to the value of this variable on treatment adherence. The study reveals that those who have self-reported treatment interruption mostly have suspicious about the partner having another relationships (secrets) and those who have never interrupted in majority are dealing to what the study variables address as exposure.

The study pulls attention to the role of information and of health education access to ART patients attempting to the loneliness, the fear of discrimination and a social support perceived as present elements of influence on the adherence to the ART. Health Professionals are seen in the study as differentiated elements with a positive role on participants ART adherence.