

STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE SUPPORT OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV

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Abstract Children with HIV experience several problems growing up. The school system is an experience likely to pose more challenges for these children. The study aimed to understand the experiences of HIV infected school-going children and that of their siblings and caregivers with the view to facilitate a continuum of support for the child at home and school.

This exploratory, descriptive, contextual study with a post-modern constructivist approach has three phases; Phase 1; a phenomenological study (completed) and Phase 2 underway. Phase 1 explored experiences of school-going children with HIV, their siblings and caregivers.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and field notes; transcribed and analysed through Giorgi's method. Phase 2 is conceptual framework development using Dickoff, James and Wiedenbach's survey list. Phase 3 will be strategy formulation to guide implementation of a continuum of support for HIV positive school-going children.

Three themes emerged but one theme with subthemes reflect in this poster: Worrying and struggling on their own. The main outcome of the study is facilitation of a home-school continuum of support for school-going children living with HIV.

Introduction The burden of HIV in Eswatini continues to ravage the healthcare system and the lives of Swati people. Despite extensive research over the past four decades since the first case was reported; there is still a dearth of knowledge on the schooling experience of the HIV infected child.

The research purpose of the study was to develop strategies of collaborative support for school-going child living with HIV by the parents/guardians and teachers.

Methods An exploratory, descriptive and contextual post-modern constructivist study, targeting school-going children (8-13 years) living with HIV, their parents/caregivers and siblings.

Sampling was purposive, to identify and recruit participants. The sample size attained through data saturation was 12 children, 11 parents/ caregivers and 2 siblings. In-depth interviews were conducted and audio-taped with permission from participants.

Data were transcribed and translated verbatim from SiSwati (local language) to English. Data analysed through Giorgi[1] method.

Results

THEME: WORRYING AND STRUGGLING ON THEIR OWN

- ◆ Children Experienced Struggling On Their Own
- ◆ Parents/Caregivers: Worried, Alone, And Without HIV Care giving Skills
- ◆ Siblings Experienced Worry About Their Siblings' General Well-Being

SUBTHEME

Discussion The school-going children living with HIV expound on their experiences and expressing feelings of sadness and worry as they think others do not understand them [2]. Keeping their status confidential was one of their huge challenges , especially keeping it from their teachers. This became more difficult on clinic days when going for refills or when ill, therefore they had to lie [2].

Parents also experienced deep fear and worry about the future of the children, as well as the social welfare of the children; and this worry extended to the siblings as well. Fear of disclosure was due to fear of rejection and isolation [3], thus parents advised their children from doing so.

The HIV infected children, their parents and siblings all wished for the child to get an education so their lives would be better in future [4].

- Feelings of sadness and worry relating to knowledge of HIV diagnosis
- HIV-related health challenges and needs with a negative impact on school attendance
- Parents/caregivers experienced deep worry and felt solely responsible for their children's well-being
- Experienced deep fear for their children not -being accepted by others
- Siblings experienced feelings of worry based on a lack of information about HIV

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References



Biography

Ms. Nomathemba Celiwe Nxumalo is a 39 year old PhD candidate from the University of Johannesburg, in the Department of Nursing; Faculty of Health Sciences, South Africa.

She is a lecturer at the University of Eswatini, Department of Community Health Nursing since 2012. Her research interest is that of children and adolescent health.

She currently has four peer reviewed publications, with one under review; and has made several oral and poster presentations at several national and international conferences.

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