

People Living with HIV/AIDS: In the Face of Social Stigma and the Role of Therapeutic Communication

Authors : Semiu Bello

Abstract : Since the discovery of HIV/AIDS in 1981, it has been a major global challenge and its ravaging consequences have had negative imprints on both the affected and infected people. The challenge of HIV/AIDS does not only affect the developing countries of the world, the developed nations have had their share of the experiences. The disease has, therefore, attracted the attentions of national governments and international donor agencies with huge financial investments toward the eradication of the virus and its global menace. Socially, however, people living with HIV/AIDS have had to battle with an array of social challenges in regards to the infection; the social stigmas, which seem to be more prevalent in underdeveloped and developing societies. The social stigmas with which people living with HIV/AIDS have suffered from include, but not limited, to social isolation, group avoidance, loss of jobs, public ridicule and non-appointment to official and government positions. Given this background, this study examines the roles of therapeutic communication otherwise called patient-provider communication within a clinical environment, focusing on Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital (OOUTH) Sagamu, Nigeria as a case study. In other words, this study will investigate the level of interpersonal communication, interactions, and relationships that often take place between people living with HIV/AIDS and health care providers including doctors, nurses and social workers. This study will methodologically adopt the in-depth interview to interview six members of people living with HIV/AIDS at OOUTH. The dimensions of the data will determine the policy prescriptions of this study, which as envisage, may contribute to the improved use of therapeutic communication by health care providers and may thereof improve the psychology of people living with HIV/AIDS in the face of any social stigma.

Keywords : health care providers, people living with HIV/AIDS, social stigma, therapeutic communication

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