

**“CHALLENGES FACED BY HIV POSITIVE PARENTS REGARDING
DISCLOSURE OF THEIR HIV STATUS TO THEIR CHILDREN IN
THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY OF
VHEMBE DISTRICT IN SOUTH AFRICA.”**

BY

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**Mini-Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters in Public Health**

University of Venda

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2014

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ABSTRACT

Parent's disclosure of their HIV positive status to their children has emerged as one of the main concerns in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The choice of disclosure or to conceal one's status remains that of the infected person, and both disclosure and concealment might result in disadvantages, such as social isolation, diminished access to health and social services and diminished sense of personal control.

The purpose of this study was to describe and explore the challenges faced by the HIV positive parents regarding disclosure of their HIV status to their children. The study adopted a qualitative design and the population included HIV positive parents attending a support group at Phiphidi clinic. The non-probability sampling method was used, to purposively select participants for the study. An interview guide was used for data collection and the interviews sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

This study showed that most parents were concerned about their children's reaction to the news and they anticipated that their children would reject and blame them for their illness. The study also showed that parents who disclosed their HIV status to their children weighed the positive outcomes of disclosure against the negative ones before disclosing to their children.

The study recommended that disclosure counselling should be an entry point at the health care facilities and support interventions, that answers the question; To whom, how, and when should one disclose. The role of the media should be considered when developing counselling interventions on HIV status disclosure.