

**EXPERIENCES OF HIV POSITIVE PATIENTS ON ANTIRETROVIRAL
TREATMENT AT THULAMELA MUNICIPALITY IN THE VHEMBE
DISTRICT OF LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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Abstract

Antiretroviral treatment (ART) has improved the quality of people who are (human immune virus) HIV positive. They have been document to decrease the morbidity and mortality of people its introduction in the late 1990's. The study addressed the experiences of HIV positive patients in the Vhembe District of Limpopo South Africa.

The aim and purpose of the study is to identify, explore, and describe the experiences of HIV positive patients on antiretroviral treatment (ART).

A qualitative research method was used where experiences of HIV positive patients was explored and described in detail. A non-probability purposive sampling was used and the target population was those HIV positive patients on ART treatment who are eighteen and above. The researcher used an in depth interview as a means for data collection.

The open coding method was used for data analysis. Six themes emanated from the study as presented underneath; each theme consists of sub-themes: Dominant tales of perceived family support for HIV positive relative on ART resulting in feelings of despair and those of being accepted; Stigma and discrimination related to taking ART; Participants' experiences while on ART; Knowledge related to ART process; Disclosure of HIV positive status; and Experiences on healthcare providers' practices in the ART clinic.

The study revealed that the role of family support is of utmost important to HIV positive patients and the government should carry out intensive support, education making awareness campaigns to affected families and patients in order to reduce stigma and discrimination and improve care and support.