

Home-Based Care and Antiretroviral Therapy for People Living with AIDS in Zimbabwe- Development of a Treatment Model for Rural Settings

The HIV/AIDS Pandemic; Zimbabwean Context

- One out of every four adults in Zimbabwe is HIV positive
- In 2003 the number of new HIV infections was 206,000 and the number of deaths due to AIDS was 171,000- nearly 500 people per day
- The epidemic is worse in the focal points of rural districts
- In a population of 11.6 million it is estimated that 1,820,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS, with an estimated 342,000 people in need of antiretroviral treatment

The Existing Program

- The proposed program will link into the existing Zimbabwean Red Cross (ZRC) Community Based HIV/AIDS Program.
- This existing program includes the following services:
 - Prevention activities targeting youth and the wider communities
 - Palliative care and support to AIDS patients and their families
 - Support to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)
- The backbone of this program is the Home Based Care (HBC) projects, which are currently implemented in 27 districts of Zimbabwe.
- In these HBC projects, Red Cross volunteers are trained as care facilitators (CF), who provide basic care and counselling to AIDS patients and their families.
- During home visits, the CFs educate the families on hygiene, nutrition, and infection control.
- The day-to-day care of the HBC client is done by the family members, with the CF providing supervision.
- The CFs and the clinics/hospitals work hand-in-hand to provide a treatment-care continuum, and a well functioning referral system between the ZRC's HBC projects and the health facilities is in place.
- Additionally, CFs are experienced in the TB Directly Observed Treatment system, thus having a solid background for monitoring adherence of patients on Antiretroviral Treatment (ART).

The Proposed Antiretroviral Treatment (ART) Intervention; HBC+

- The proposed ART intervention will link into the previously described program, adding Antiretroviral Treatment as another Home-Based Care project:
ART+HBC = HBC+
- Diagnosis and treatment should be initiated and followed up by the district hospital and the rural health nurse, respectively.
- Community mobilization and the post treatment support will be built into the CF's day-to-day tasks, carried out through existing activities such as home visits and support groups.
- The existing program's vast community networks will be used as roads for prevention messages targeting a broader audience than in and out of school youth.
- The overall objective of the HBC+ project is to reduce morbidity and mortality caused by HIV/AIDS among vulnerable people in two rural districts in Zimbabwe.