Family caregiving of persons living with HIV and AIDS in rural Namibia

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Abstract

Statement of the Problem: In sub-Saharan Africa, the advent for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) had dramatically altered the nature of informal caregiving. Countries in this region are faced with the challenge of providing care and support to people living HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) at home. Scholars assert that many caregivers are predominately older women, living below the poverty line, experiencing financial and psychological strain. To understand the psychological well-being of these caregivers, studies have examined factors such as (physical, social, and mental well-being of caregivers, and HIV-related stigma) influencing the quality of life of family members caring for PLWHA. However, little is known about this phenomenon in Namibia, one of the top five countries in the world with the highest AIDS prevalence rates. Thus, this study explored the relationship between HIV-related stigma, depression, and food security on caregiver burden.

Methodology: A purposive sampling method was used to recruit a sample of 97 caregivers who were caring for a family member living with AIDS.

Findings: The average age of the caregivers was 45.6 years (SD=9.3), a majority (88.7%) were female. 85% had a chronic illness that prevented them from working. Correlation analysis showed that caregiver burden was significantly negatively associated with their quality of life (Pearson correlation=-0.38, $p<0.000$). Caregiving burden was positively associated with their depression level (Pearson correlation=0.38, $p<0.000$). After controlling for caregiver socio-demographics, household hunger, and HIV-related stigma, caregiver burden was still significantly related with their quality of life ($\beta=-0.18$, $p=0.001$) and depression level ($\beta=0.16$, $p=0.001$).

Conclusion & Recommendations: Findings underscore the complex nature of HIV/AIDS caregiving. Further research is needed to examine the stress process of caregiving among HIV-affected families.

Biography

Eveline Ndii Kalomo is an Assistant Professor at Wichita State, School of Social Work. She teaches various courses in social work for students both in the undergraduate and graduate programs. Her research interests are intersections of HIV/AIDS and, kinship caregiving, population aging, gerontology, mental health, intimate partner violence, substance abuse, children's mental health and educational outcomes. She has expertise and passion in improving the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by HIV and AIDS in Africa. Her research area stemmed from her extensive experience working with families and children affected by AIDS in Namibia.

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