

HIV: Positive lessons from home-based care

January 19 2010

Intensive home-based nursing in HIV/AIDS patients significantly improves self-reported knowledge of HIV, awareness of medications, and self-reported adherence to medication programmes, according to a new Cochrane Systematic Review. One home-based care trial included in the review also significantly impacted on HIV stigma, worry, and physical functioning. It did not, however, help improve depressive symptoms, mood, general health, and overall functioning.

These conclusions are interesting, but more research is needed to understand the impact of home-based care in developing countries and on important disease outcomes, say the researchers. The study represents the first systematic review of the impact of home care in [HIV/AIDS](#).

As a disease that affects 33 million people, HIV/AIDS puts a huge strain on health systems, particularly in developing countries. Therefore, in countries where health services are overstretched, home-based care is offered to HIV patients as an alternative to hospital care. Home-based care can include counselling, medical management, exercise, and spiritual support to try to improve patients' quality of life in familiar surroundings, while reducing costs and pressure on hospital beds.

Researchers examined data from 13 studies, two of which were ongoing. The researchers report that home-based care has positive impacts on some aspects of patient wellbeing but little effect on others. Patients said that home care improved their knowledge of the disease, and of HIV medications, and helped them adhere to medication programmes. It also reduced worry and improved physical functions of patients, but had little

effect on depression, general health, or indicators of disease progression such as CD4 counts.

Importantly, few studies considered the effects of home-based care in developing countries or on important disease outcomes. "Further large studies are needed to evaluate the effects of home-based care in developing countries, where HIV and AIDS take the biggest toll," said Young. "And there should be a greater focus on how home-based care impacts on progression to full blown [AIDS](#) and death from the disease."

"This study is a useful addition to the literature because of the wide range of home care options considered. However, there is no doubt that the evidence base for home-based care in HIV needs further development."

Provided by Wiley

Citation: HIV: Positive lessons from home-based care (2010, January 19) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2010-01-hiv-positive-lessons-home-based.html>

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