

Younger people, men and those without children more likely to drop out of HIV care in South Africa

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Analysis carried out by an academic at Royal Holloway, University of London has revealed that younger people, men and those without children are more likely to stop attending clinics for HIV treatment in South Africa.

Dr Michael Evangeli, from the Department of Psychology at Royal Holloway, worked alongside colleagues at the University of Southampton and the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. The academics used data collected in a study, which is published in the journal *PLOS ONE*, that followed the progress of 380 HIV positive people eligible for HIV treatment in a rural part of South Africa over a four year period and looked at what was associated with whether they dropped out of care.

Dr Evangeli, lead author of the study, said: "There is a pressing need to engage [young people](#), and men, in long-term care. Medication for HIV is only given to those who are most unwell and they need to attend clinics regularly. Failing to attend is a problem for both the health of these individuals and for the health of others whom they may put at risk of HIV infection."

South Africa has the largest HIV positive population in the world – around six million people. One in five adults in South Africa are HIV positive.

"We need to improve our understanding of retention in care in future studies. Ultimately strategies must be put in place to help people remain in care and get the treatment they so desperately need to help slow down the spread of HIV and save as many lives as possible," added Dr Evangeli.

Provided by Royal Holloway, University of London

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