

Researchers troubleshoot barriers to HIV care and treatment after diagnosis

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When an individual is diagnosed with HIV, it is important that they are enrolled in an HIV care and treatment program to get the medical and emotional support they need. Evidence shows that expansions of the anti-

retroviral treatment (ART) eligibility criteria prior to the current "universal treatment" recommendation increased the amount of people initiating ART in a timely manner but, in sub-Saharan Africa, linkage to care after diagnosis remains a challenge.

To investigate, a research team including Associate Professor Elizabeth Kelvin led a [cohort study](#) among newly diagnosed HIV-positive people in South Africa. The results were published in the journal *AIDS and Behavior*.

The study found that people's beliefs (e.g. positive attitudes about the impact of enrolling in HIV care and about ART) and relationships (e.g. disclosure of HIV status) were positively associated with linkage to care. This suggests that interventions that educate about the benefits of HIV care and ART as well as disclosure support might have an impact on linkage to care and should be evaluated.

"It is also important that we continue to examine what it means to individuals to engage in care and treatment and develop better measures of individuals' beliefs, including stigma perceptions," Kelvin says.

More information: Susie Hoffman et al. Linkage to Care Following an HIV Diagnosis in Three Public Sector Clinics in eThekweni (Durban), South Africa: Findings from a Prospective Cohort Study, *AIDS and Behavior* (2019). [DOI: 10.1007/s10461-019-02688-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-019-02688-1)

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