

An Analysis of the Correlation between HIV Primary Outpatient Healthcare Adherence and Social Support

Danielle LeePow, Dr. Rebecca Reviere (Mentor), Sociology

Previous studies have found that social ties and support are associated with a person's HIV risk behaviors, use of medical services, and medical adherence. Little research provides information that would enlighten strategies and target groups for programs that combine HIV care, support, and prevention. The goal of this research project was to use secondary quantitative data to assess the correlation between adherence to primary HIV outpatient healthcare among HIV seropositive individuals and their social and environmental support systems and to explore in-depth interviews to aid in the interpretation of quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected from 462 baseline surveys of the ARK (Action through Knowledge and Resources) Study, and the qualitative data was collected from in-depth interviews of seven ARK Study participants. Overall the results suggest that for people living with HIV/AIDS, having social network members who provide social support is a mechanism to improve medication adherence, use of primary HIV healthcare, and comfort in taking HIV medication around others. The findings will be applied to future interventions to improve medication adherence, and use of primary HIV healthcare among people living with HIV and will include members of his or her social network.