Challenges Facing Care Takers Of HIV Infected Children Attending Pediatric Patient Support Centre Clinic In Kisii Level 5 Hospital.

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Abstract:

Despite the important role played by the care takers of the HIV infected children, not much has been done to understand their unique care giving needs and ways in which their needs can be addressed by HIV IAIDS programs. The study was conducted in Kisii level 5 hospital in Kisii County, Nyanza province at a budget cost of Ksh.116 025 only. The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges and coping mechanisms of the care takers of the HIV infected children with a view to come up with strategies of supporting them. This was a descriptive cross-sectional study that employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. The target population was all adult caretakers bringing HIV infected children for follow up in the Pediatric Patient Support Centre (PSC). Systematic sampling technique was used to draw the participants from the population. Quantitative data was collected using a structured questionnaire and qualitative data through tape recorded Focused Group Discussion (FGD) with care takers. Data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods and ethical consideration was observed. The study findings showed that majority of the caretakers were female biological parents aged between 20-49 years with most of them between 30-39 years. The caretakers were the breadwinners and were engaged in small scale businesses and farming. The caretakers faced a variety of challenges including social, economic, psychological and spiritual. Majority of community members were not aware of the scrostatus of the HIV infected children. The caretakers had established their own coping mechanisms as individuals and most of them got support from the nuclear family members. There was no formal social support system established within reach and the ones that were said to exist were not well organized hence none of the participants was a member. The caretakers suggested assistance in areas of nutrition, health care, education and finances to start or boost their businesses. Recommendations from this study were that the community members should be sensitized on the importance of community involvement in HIV management to reduce stigma. Social support systems for caretakers to be encouraged to prevent burn-out and Caretakers to be empowered and supported to start Income Generating Activities for economic self-reliance.