

**“As the candidate’s supervisor I agree/do not agree to the submission of this dissertation”**

**Supervisor:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Co-Supervisor:**.....

**Date:**.....

## **DEDICATION**

**This study is dedicated to all those who are affected by and infected with HIV and AIDS and those dedicated health workers who care for them.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge my indebtedness to

Almighty God for the inspiration and for my persistent survival in spite of the odds. I do understand.

All my mentors from whom I have learnt the principles of Public Health  
Medicine

My supervisors, Dr. Anna Voce and Professor Anna Meyer-Weitz for several reviews, corrections and editing of the draft of this dissertation

Ms. Carrin Martin, who painstakingly proof-read and edited the final draft of the dissertation,

My research assistant and colleagues, who assisted in conducting the interviews, and

Friends and family members, for their understanding and their cooperation.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Adebisi Muhammed Abubakar Lawal declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted:
  - a) Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Introduction**

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection and Auto-Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) have spread globally during the past twenty-eight years and 67% of people living with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. HIV and AIDS are now the leading cause of death in this region. Worldwide, it is the fourth biggest killer.

Nurses in health institutions in South Africa face challenges as result of increased number of very sick and terminally ill patients who are admitted to the hospital due to HIV and AIDS epidemics. Workloads have increased with no concomitant increase in number of staff to care for the patients.

### **Aim**

This study aims to identify dynamics of care of professional patients with HIV and AIDS by nurses and make recommendations that will deal with these problems

### **Methods**

A qualitative study was conducted with the study population drawn from professional nurses who were involved in the care of patients with HIV and AIDS in the medical wards at Ngwelezana Hospital for at least five years. One focus group discussion was also conducted. The sample was selected purposively.

### **Results**

The study revealed many issues affecting the care nurses gave to patients with HIV and AIDS and the personal challenges (physical and emotional) they faced in the course of their work. Amongst these are contextual challenges which pertained mainly to health system issues- lack of institutional support and incentives, heavy workload with concomitant increase in number of patients attended to by nurses, training needs of nurses and multidisciplinary team work.

Nurses had to deal with personal challenges such as helplessness, frustration, anger, death anxiety, physical and emotional stress. However, there were positive experiences such as empathy and self-actualisation in being able to care for terminally ill patients and seeing some of them get better with treatment.

**Recommendations**

These include the need to address the training needs of nurses about management of HIV and AIDS, institutional support for nurses, critical incident debriefing and community awareness

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## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

For the purpose of this study the following definitions apply:

### **AIDS**

Auto-immune deficiency syndrome: This is the terminal stage of HIV symptomatology complex.

### **Registered Nurse**

An individual authorized and capable of practicing nursing or midwifery independently by virtue of registration in terms of section 16 of Nursing Act 50 of 1998.

Such a person is accountable for prescribing, supervising and carrying out nursing regime, coordinating and integrating the multi-disciplinary therapeutic regime based on diagnosing the needs and demands of a unique patient in a unique situation (Kotze, J. 1998.South African Nursing Council (SANC) terminology List)

### **Regional Hospital**

A facility that provides care requiring the intervention of specialists as well as general medical services (KZN Health Act, 2006)

### **District Hospital**

A facility at which a range of outpatient and in patient services are offered mostly, within the scope of a general medical practitioner. (KZN Health Act, 2006).

## **ACRONYMS**

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ART	Anti-retroviral Therapy
ARV	Anti-retroviral drug
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICN	International Council of Nurses
Int #	Interviewee number
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on AIDS
WHO	World Health Organisation

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