

A marginalised population: Using Intersectionality to explore the Adherence to Antiretroviral therapy among persons with disabilities living with HIV.

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Background:

Persons with disabilities living with HIV (PWDLHIV) experience overlapping markers of stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to basic amenities, education, and health services. They also suffer from a lack of HIV interventions and services presented in terms of unavailability of technical aids, lack of access to health facilities, and access to HIV diagnosis, prevention, and treatment services. PWDLHIV experience other intersecting issues of gender and poverty. This study explored the lived experiences of PWDLHIV concerning adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) in Nigeria.

Methods:

This qualitative study adopted intersectionality as a theoretical framework. Twenty-nine (29) PWDLHIV were purposively sampled and interviewed from 6 Nigerian states with high and medium prevalence. Repeat interviews were also conducted with some participants, making 37 interviews. The choice of the research states was premised on Nigeria's AIDS Indicator Impact Survey (NAIS). Structured observations were also conducted to support the interview process. Analysis was done using Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Results:

This study found that sociocultural beliefs were still drivers of stigma and discrimination among PWDLHIV, limiting their access to ART. Other barriers to ART access were poverty, type of disability, and HIV status non-disclosure. Enablers to ART adherence were social support, parenthood, the God factor, and serostatus disclosure. These factors were sometimes hierarchical and presented different intersecting realities for PWDLHIV in relation to gender, socioeconomic status, and social location.

Conclusion:

This study adds new knowledge and is one of the first studies that explored adherence to ART among PWDLHIV in Nigeria. Following Nigeria's completion of the biggest population-based HIV survey, the findings of this study may be of local and global significance to HIV policy and programming in an area where there is still a dearth of literature. This study also gives direction toward the achievement of the 95-95-95 goal in Nigeria.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None

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