

Sero-status of preschoolers and disclosure to schools

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Description:

Infants with HIV-infection have longevity due to improved Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART), making many realise their developmental progression which includes access to schooling. However, there is scant information that focuses on disclosure of their positive sero-status to schools and how these children understand and communicate their illnesses. This paper reports on a study of experiences of children affected by HIV and AIDS in Kenya. Qualitative phenomenological data from children aged between 5 and 7 years and their teachers in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centres were collected using multiple methods. Thematic content analysis was utilised with several themes emerging from findings. Obstacles to disclosure, anticipation of exceptional care, accidental disclosures, lack of psychosocial structures, a need for specialised skills training for teachers, and lack of clear guidelines to assist in disclosure processes emerged as some of the challenges faced. The findings also provide insights into teachers' scaffolding efforts to educate children in understanding and communicating their illnesses, and forging support structures through relationships with their siblings and peers for care and management.

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