

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to explore the perceptions of health care, and social services professionals on the psychosocial impact of African rural families. The research questions addressed were, the impact of HIV/AIDS on rural families, the impact on affected others, how HIV/AIDS has changed definition of rural families' structures and the coping strategies adopted by these families in coping with the psychosocial impact of HIV/AIDS. The data were collected from six participants namely; 4 health care and 2 social services professionals who had an experience of 8 years dealing directly with families affected by the epidemic. This was an exploratory study and the measure used was semi-structured interview using open-ended questions to allow participants to reflect on their experiences as well as allowing the researcher to explore any areas that seemed necessary. The main results of the study revealed that there is a relationship between poverty and HIV/AIDS. The study also revealed the detrimental effect of HIV/AIDS on women and children as well as how cultural beliefs might at times be an obstacle for the intervention programmes to be effective. The findings have implications for the health care and social services professionals dealing with affected families that more psychosocial support is needed. Recommendations for further research on more studies related to the results as well as implementations of intervention programmes were indicated.

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own work. It is submitted for the degree Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Ponky Ramosolo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for his guidance and for extending my life to be where I am

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Professor Thoko Mayekiso, who expertly, caringly, and patiently guided me in the most non-judgmental way.

I would also like to thank my family for their support and making the process bearable and for also bearing my shortcomings during the process; especially my mother Shirley for her valuable advises and financial support, my father Alex, my two brothers, Thabiso and Tshepiso for believing in me, my little sister Midah-hope for keeping laughing, my uncles Lanky and Kholo, my aunts, Tony and Pepsi, my sister in law Yvonne and my two grandmothers Dihlong and Pricilla. Not forgetting all my cousins for their encouragement especially Poeletso. Lastly I would also like to thank our helper Reginah for taking care of my domestic chores.

Not forgetting to thank Mr. Thabani Sibande for his valuable ideas during the writing of the proposal.

I also thank my friends Lolo, Walter, Shantall, Nicky, Petunia, Angie, Mpumi, Babalo, Zodwa and Millicent for their understanding and support. I know there were times they felt neglected by me, despite this they kept on being supportive and understanding.

I would also like to thank Wits University for the financial support.

I would also like to give my gratitude the hospital superintendent and to participants who allowed me to interview them.