CHARACTERISTICS OF 'LOST TO FOLLOW UP' PATIENTS ON ANTIRETROVIRAL TREATMENT (ART) DEFAULTING AT TSHWANE DISTRICT HOSPITAL

By

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DECLARATION

I Olufunmilayo Itunu Ubogu declare that this research is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Public Health (Hospital Management) in the University of Witwatersrand Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

After 25 years of existence, the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) has become a global challenge. Yearly, about 3 million people in the sub Saharan region become infected with the disease each year, while 2 million die of the disease. The young, sexually active and those in the economically active group are mostly affected although other categories are also affected.

Over the years efforts have been made to turn HIV infection from a death sentence to a manageable chronic disease through the use of antiretro viral treatment (ART). Despite the fact that this treatment is a life-long commitment with adherence being crucial to its effectiveness, some patients still default.

This research study sought to identify the characteristics of HIV positive patients who are lost to follow up after the initiation of antiretroviral treatment over a 2-year period (2007-2008). A tick sheet was used to collect data from all the files of patients lost to follow up and 20 variables were tested. The conclusion reached is that age, sex, distance of residence to the ART site and economic capability contribute to 'lost to follow-up'.

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Table of Contents

Page

LIST OF GRAPHS **Page**

LIST OF TABLES

Glossary of Terms		
1	Adherence	Compliance (or Adherence) is a medical term that is used to indicate a patient's correct following of medical advice.
2	ART	Anti-retro viral therapies.
3	CHW	Community Health Care Workers.
4	Defaulter	A patient who fails to fulfil the obligation to attend the clinic appointment, and or misses his medication as instructed.
5	Stata	Statistical package for data analysis.
6	HAART	Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy.
7	HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus.
8	NGO	Non-governmental Organisation.
9	PAH	Pretoria Academic Hospital (now known as Steve Biko Academic Hospital).
10	PHC	Primary Health Care.
11	UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS.
12	WHO	World Health Organisation.
13	HIV positive (HIV+)	Presence of Human immune deficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS, in the blood and confirmed by two successive ELISA test and the Western Blot.
14	PCP	Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP) is a life threatening form of pneumonia that occurs in people with suppressed immune systems. It is one of the most common opportunistic infection in people with HIV/AIDS.
15	Regimen	A particular antiretroviral programme.
16	Tuberculosis (TB)	An infection caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, not uncommon among HIV positive people.
17	White Blood cells	They are part of the immune systems and protect the body against foreign substances such as diseases-producing micro-organisms.
18	Kaposi Sarcoma	A cancer-like growth of the blood vessels that appears as dark raised areas on the skin which often appears on the trunk or upper body and also on the ears and nose.