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Health Professional's Perceptions on the Integration of Mental Health into HIV Services at Primary Health Care Settings in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa

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Background: The integration of mental health services into HIV services is still limited to non-existent across the Sub-Saharan African region, despite a significant increase in the volume of literature on mental health needs of people living with HIV (PLWH) over the last two decades. The poor attention to the mental well-being of PLWH across the region is inconsistent with available evidence indicating that firstly, mental disorders contribute largely to disease burdens. PLWH are more likely to suffer from mental disorders compared to the general population. Studies indicate that most health professionals are not ready to integrate mental health into HIV services.

Study Aim: This study aims to analyze the implementation of a national mental health policy framework on the integration of mental health care into HIV services at selected primary health care settings.

Methodology: Data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Questionnaires were administered to 200 participants who agreed to partake on the study after having signed the consent. Focus group discussions were done and interviews were conducted with key informants. The target population included nurses, doctors, psychologists and experts in mental health and HIV, attending to clients in the Primary Health Care services, Mental Health Care Institutions and HIV services on daily basis and who have been working there for not less than two years.

Results: Findings revealed that almost 75% of the participants had negative perceptions towards the integration of mental health into HIV services at primary health care settings.

Expected Outcome: Guidelines detailing the process on how the integration of mental health into HIV services should be implemented.

Biography:

Winnie Baphumelele Cele (M Cur in Mental Health Nursing.; Dip: Gen Nurse: Community: Psychiatric and Midwifery Nursing science: B.Cur in Nursing Education, Nursing Management; joined Nursing Education at Kwa-Zulu Natal College of Nursing in 2004 till 2017) joined the Nursing Department at the University of KwaZulu Natal in 2018. Winnie Baphumelele Cele obtained her Master's Degree at UKZN and is a PHD candidate. She is teaching Mental Health Nursing both at undergraduate and Post graduate level. Her interests also include Psychology; she is a contributor in different radio stations and 1 KZN TV addressing the issues of Mental Health and Psychological problems affecting the communities. Part of her work includes coordination of a service learning programme in Bachelor of Nursing program. She is a registered member with the South African Nursing Council.