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A Concept Analysis: Support for Lay Health Care Workers in HIV services

S B Pitse, P R Risenga

College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa

Background: Different lay health care workers play an important role in the retention of clients to HIV care. Retention to HIV care is crucial to promote treatment continuation, viral suppression and reduced risk of transmission. However, lay health care workers view and perceive support differently.

Objectives: The aim of the study was to investigate perceptions of health care workers regarding support provided to lay health care workers in HIV services. This article is a report of a concept analysis of health care workers' support provided to lay health care workers in HIV services, that was collected during the study. A concept analysis was done to explore the support attributes, clarify meaning and to understand its use within the lay health care workers' context in Bojanala district, South Africa.

Method: The initial phase was data collection from lay health care workers, their supervisors and clients on antiretroviral therapy. Thereafter, the eight concept analysis steps of Walker and Avant were followed. Peer-reviewed articles on the support concept were searched and guided by data saturation.

Results: Responsiveness, provision, reciprocity and integration are key characteristics of support.

Conclusion: Despite support being an interpersonal process, it is perceived subjectively. Support is necessary to continuously promote growth or endurance during adverse times.

Contribution: The concept analysis will provide common understanding of support and information that is responsive to the needs of different lay health care workers.

Keywords: Support concept analysis; Support measures; Instrumental support; Emotional support; Lay health care workers; Health care workers; Retention to HIV care; Integration.

risenpr@unisa.ac.za