

ABSTRACT

Background:

Caregivers of HIV infected children on antiretroviral drugs face a lot of challenges in the process of care, how these caregivers cope with daily hassles of care depend on the individual coping mechanism. Objective: To assess coping mechanisms and quality of life among caregivers of HIV infected children on antiretroviral drugs.

Methods: Participants included caregivers of HIV positive children who have administered antiretroviral drugs to their children for at least six months. Three sections ABC were used to elicit bio-data, challenges and coping mechanism.

Results: Majority of the caretakers 90.3% were females with the average age of 40.1 years, the majority 44.2% had not attained any formal education and the average duration they had administered the drugs to the children was 13.3 months. The average age of the children on antiretroviral therapy was 8.4 years; the majority of them 42.3% had lost both parents. The caregivers mostly used confrontive coping (n=104; 56%), and passive (n = 104; 43%). Trends showed that the number of HIV-positive children cared for was significantly positively related to confrontive coping, and significantly inversely related to passive and emotive styles of coping. Passive coping and emotive coping were significantly positively related to feeling depressed and alcohol usage.

CONCLUSION: Caregivers provide physical and emotional support to children with HIV/AIDS, but they also need physical and emotional support themselves, Nurses and counselors are in excellent positions to help these caregivers improve their own health and well-being, which will in turn benefit the children for children under their care.

RECOMMENDATION.

The ART clinic team should try as much as possible to arrange for counseling which may include family counseling to help the families cope with the emotional upheaval inherent in a fatal or chronic condition and counseling (teaching) on positive coping methods, such as the use of problem-solving steps, social and communication skills, decision-making, negotiation, cognitive restructuring, relaxation, and humor.