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Factors influencing adherence to antiretroviral therapy among HIV/AIDS patients in the greater Mekong subregion

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Background: Adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV/AIDS patients is essential to obtain treatment success and to prevent the development of HIV drug resistance in patients. A number of studies have been carried out on factors influencing adherence to ART; however, there has been no study reviewing the mentioned factors in the greater Mekong subregion (GMS). This research aimed to describe barriers and facilitators of treatment adherence among HIV/AIDS patients and to provide recommendations to promote adherence to ART in the subregion.

Methods: A literature review was used as the primary method for producing, collating and summarizing the research on this topic to date with a view to generate effective interventions in future. The literature review included a wide range of journal articles, written reports, publications, journals, books, texts, and other online articles on adherence to antiretroviral therapy among HIV/AIDS patients in Vietnam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Myanmar and Yunnan province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China dated from 2005 to 2013.

Results: Factors which affect treatment adherence among HIV/AIDS patients include financial difficulties, medication side-effects, distance to the hospital, stigma and discrimination, self-awareness, poor family and social support, simply forgetting, untreated depression, and patient-health care provider relationship. Some of facilitators of treatment adherence have been emphasized which include social and family support, self-efficacy and desire to live longer.

Conclusions: The findings in this study suggest that future intervention programs in promoting adherence to ART should focus on financial support, regular provision of counseling on medication side-effects, treatment for patients with depressive symptoms, easy-access drug dispensing points, family and social support enhancement as well as having good patient-health care provider relationships.

Biography

Do Tuan Kim has completed his Medical Doctor degree from Hanoi University of Medicine in 2002 and finished his Master degree of Public Health from Queensland University of Technology, Australia in 2010. He is now Chief of Adult HIV/AIDS care and treatment of a project managed by Ministry of Health in Vietnam.

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