ILLNESS SUFFERING EXPERIENCE, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS: A CASE STUDY OF PLWAS USING VOLUNTARY COUNSELING CONFIDENTIALITY AND TESTING IN KIRIVONG REFERRAL HOSPITAL, TAKEO PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

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ABSTRACT

This research is a qualitative study using data collection and in-depth interview. The research design was based on the symbolic interactions theory. The study focuses on the behaviour of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs) and their reactions to HIV/AIDS in term of the experiences of HIV-related illness suffering and stigma. The data presented in this study illustrates PLWAs feelings of illness coping, adjusting, and lifestyle and disease management. The phase of illness suffering and stigma interfere with PLWAs seeking and using of VCCT center on time. However, effective management of HIV requires timely testing for HIV diagnosis.

This study revealed that the length of illness suffering and stigma phases were based on symptoms and the asymptomatic stages of the infected people. These effects go beyond infected individuals to more broadly into society both disrupting, and disturbing the functioning of communities. As a result access to the health care for HIV patients can be delay. The analysis of this research indicated that illness suffering and stigma drives HIV people infected with HIV out of public sight and also disrupts the efforts to attain timely testing. Stigma also introduces a desire to hide self identity. In addition, at an individual level stigma undermines the person's identity and capacity to cope with the disease. Fear of discrimination limits the possibility of disclosure even to potential important sources of support such as family and friends, and has social implications. All interventions need to address individual illness suffering, stigma, and discrimination as a priority. However, the difficulty of the task should not be underestimated, as has been shown by the persistence of these issues which are based on a variety of related factors.

KEY WORDS : HIV/AIDS ILLNESS SUFFERING/ STIGMA/ DISCRIMINATION/ VCCT

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