Adherence to antiretroviral therapy among patients lost-to-follow up: A case of an HIV clinic in private-for-profit health facility in Kampala, Uganda

Faith Kayanga¹#, Ronald Anguzu¹,²*
¹ Makerere University School of Public Health, Uganda
² El-Chanun Community Health Initiatives (ELCOHIN)
#Email: faithturyagyenda@yahoo.co.uk
*Corresponding author: ronaldanguzu@yahoo.com

**Background:** Adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART) is a cornerstone for successful HIV treatment outcomes. Lifelong treatment on ART and loss-to-follow up in HIV care potentially leads to non-adherence.

**Objectives:** This study estimated the level of adherence to ART among HIV positive patients’ lost-to-follow and reasons for loss-to-follow up from an HIV clinic in Kampala, Uganda.

**Methods:** A health facility based cross-sectional study was conducted in an HIV clinic in Kampala district. Medical records of 550 HIV positive attending the HIV clinic from April 2005 to April 2012 in a private-for-profit health facility were analyzed. Per ART dataset, 147 HIV positive patients were identified as being lost-to-follow up to HIV care among which 94 were accessible for interviews. Loss-to-follow up was regarded as HIV positive patients who had not attended ART clinic for 4 months or more. A telephone interview was conducted using a pretested structured questionnaire in order to assess adherence to ART and factors associated with loss-to-follow up from the ART clinic.

**Results:** The level of adherence to ART was high (77.7%) with a modest level of loss-to-follow up (26.7%). Predictors of adherence to ART were; distance from health facility (AOR 0.01, 95%CI:0.00-0.35), health worker attitude (AOR 9.43, 95%CI:1.55-57.43) and patients perception of lifetime ART medication (AOR 26.54, 95%CI:3.33-211.2).

**Conclusions:** Adherence to ART is high among HIV patients lost-to-follow up in Kampala. Interventions targeting health worker attitudes such as comprehensive HIV training may reduce loss-to-follow up in HIV care. Behavior change strategies in addition to pre- and post- HIV test counseling focusing on altering the perceptions of HIV positive patients may further improve ART adherence.