

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE OCCURRENCE OF ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS IN PATIENTS ON ANTI –
RETROVIRAL DRUGS AT BETA CARE HOSPITAL AND GOVERNMENT OF KENYA GITHUNGURI HEALTH
FACILITY KIAMBU COUNTY.**

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ABSTRACT

The antiretroviral drugs like most medicines cause side effects which are often mild, but sometimes are more serious and can have a major impact on health or quality of life. On rare occasions side effects can be life threatening. Since antiretroviral treatment must be taken every day for life, it is vital that people receiving antiretroviral treatment get all the help they need to minimize the impact of side effects.

The study was to assess the side effects associated with antiretroviral drugs, and the impact the side effects have on patients' compliance as well as the corrective measures which were being undertaken at Beta Care hospital and GOK Githunguri Health Facility.

Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data because they helped the researcher get relevant information by facing clients and assess clients' reactions to certain questions. Questionnaires made it easier to comment because information was achieved direct from source and was precise.

Data was collected from clients who were currently on ARVs and had side effects upon uptake, then presented on descriptive form and used in discussions. Data was then coded and entered in Microsoft excel 2007 and SPSS for analysis and report writing.

According to the study male and female respondents had an almost equal chance of having side effects. Majority of the respondents experienced adverse effects of lipodystrophy and after a close examination they were either on d4T or had previously been on a regime with d4T. This was followed closely by anemia caused by AZT or clients previously on a regimen with AZT. However boys and young men between the ages 0-20 on ARVs appeared to suffer more from adverse effects (80%) compared to 20% girls in the same age bracket (ratio 4:1). They should therefore be monitored closely for emergence of side effects when starting treatment of ARVs preferably on weekly basis until they are considered safe.

From the findings it is important to avoid alcohol consumption, smoking, recreational drugs and substance abuse, as well as over the counter medication, whose interaction with the antiretroviral may be confused with adverse reactions, leading to non adherence of ARVs.

Men should be encouraged to know their HIV status early and enroll in comprehensive care clinics (CCC) for treatment and counseling. This would help avoid advanced HIV/AIDs cases with very low CD4 cells counts and a highly compromised immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome (IRIS).