

**A STUDY OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SUBOPTIMAL  
ADHERENCE TO ANTIRETROVIRAL DRUGS AT SPECIAL  
TREATMENT CENTRE-CASINO, NAIROBI.**

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## ABSTRACT

The development of drug-resistant strains of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) due to suboptimal adherence to treatment, and the increasing numbers of HIV infected patients requiring chronic medication represents a challenge for medical care. Non adherence to antiretrovirals is an increasingly recognized cause of adverse treatment outcomes and increased healthcare costs. This study was aimed at establishing factors that are associated with suboptimal adherence to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs among adults on antiretroviral therapy and to identify and recommend possible interventions to improve adherence. The survey was carried out between August 2013 and September 2013 at Special Treatment Centre-Casino, situated within Central Business District, Nairobi County. A cross-sectional survey study design was employed, with both quantitative and qualitative research methods of inquiry used. The study population was HIV/AIDS adult clients, who were attending the clinic as out-patients and receiving antiretroviral drugs. One hundred and fifteen (115) clients participated in the study. The quantitative data was collected using self administered structured exit questionnaires, whereas qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interviews of healthcare providers, FGDs and personal observations. The respondents included ARV users, patient treatment assistants, where present, and health care providers. Adherence in this study was defined as the number of times the patients actually took their medications during a period of one month, as a proportion of the number of times that they are recommended to do so. Optimal adherence was defined as an adherence rate of 95% or higher, since this is the level generally deemed necessary for treatment success and to avoid the development of resistance to treatment. Levels of adherence below 95% were considered to be sub-optimal. From the quantitative data, the study revealed a mean adherence rate of 87.8%, which fell below the requisite 95%. It was hoped that the study findings and recommendations would provide valuable reference for policy makers, researchers and all the stakeholders involved in the care, support and treatment of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infected and affected clients.