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Accuracy of tuberculosis routine data and nurses' views of the TB-HIV information system in the Free State, South Africa

CITATION

Heunis C, Wouters E, Kigozi G, Engelbrecht M, Tsibolane Y, Van der Merwe S & Motlhanke S. 2011. Accuracy of tuberculosis routine data and nurses' views of the TB-HIV information system in the Free State, South Africa. *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care*, 22(1): 67-73. DOI: 10.1016/j.jana.2010.06.003

ABSTRACT

Reliable data are a prerequisite for evidence-based decision making in health care policy (AbouZahr & Boerma, 2005). Accurate measurement is crucial in evaluating epidemic trends, as well as in planning and monitoring disease-specific service provision. On the basis of a systematic review of descriptive and comparative studies and previous reviews of health information technologies, Chaudhry et al. (2006) demonstrated the efficacy of information gathered using health information technologies, such as electronic health records, to improve both quality and efficiency of health care. Sound data are especially vital for the success of large-scale public sector health programs in developing countries where limited human and financial resources require their optimal use (Fraser et al., 2005). Lippeveld (in AbouZahr & Boerma, 2005) defined a health information system (HIS) as an "integrated effort to collect, process, report and use health information and knowledge to influence policy-making, programme action and research" (p. 579). HISs are especially important when responses need to be urgent, as in the case of epidemic diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) and HIV infection. The scale-up of both TB and HIV treatment in resource-limited settings such as South Africa requires an integrated approach that bundles the respective TB and HIV information systems to combat the co-epidemic.