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Life with HIV as a chronic illness: a theoretical and methodological framework for antiretroviral treatment studies in resource-limited settings

CITATION

Wouters E. 2012. Life with HIV as a chronic illness: a theoretical and methodological framework for antiretroviral treatment studies in resource-limited settings. *Social Theory and Health*, 10(4): 368-391. DOI: 10.1057/sth.2012.12

ABSTRACT

The large-scale introduction of antiretroviral treatment (ART) in the developing world has transformed HIV/AIDS into a manageable chronic condition. However, research is urgently needed to address the specific needs for sustainable ART scale-up in these high-prevalence, resource-limited settings. The current article aims to set a new agenda for future research on the facilitators of and impediments to lasting success of ART in resource-limited settings. There are two parts to this article: (1) construction of a robust theoretical framework labelled the Individual-Family-Community (IFC) model and including the potentially valuable concepts of hybrid identity, family resilience and competent communities, to explain the impact of HIV/AIDS and ART on those affected, and the response of society; and (2) specification of associated methodological tools, that is, latent growth modelling, to generate new knowledge and implement the IFC-model. The proposed theoretical framework and the associated methodology could guide future HIV/AIDS research by suggesting pathways to model the recent paradigm shift of AIDS care to chronic disease care, as well as a full-blown epidemic that affects all aspects of society in a resource-limited setting.