



## Centre for health Systems Research & Development

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### Families as catalysts for peer adherence support in enhancing hope for people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa

#### CITATION

Masquillier C, Wouters E, Mortelmans D & le Roux Booyesen F. 2014. Families as catalysts for peer adherence support in enhancing hope for people living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa. *Journal of the International AIDS Society*, 17: 18802. DOI: 10.7448/IAS.17.1.18802

#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Hope is an essential dimension of successful coping in the context of illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, because positive expectations for the future alleviate emotional distress, enhance quality of life and have been linked to the capacity for behavioural change. The social environment (e.g. family, peers) is a regulator of hope for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). In this regard, the dual aim of this article is (1) to analyze the influence of a peer adherence support (PAS) intervention and the family environment on the state of hope in PLWHA and (2) to investigate the interrelationship between the two determinants.

**Methods:** The Effective AIDS Treatment and Support in the Free State study is a prospective randomized controlled trial. Participants were recruited from 12 public anti-retroviral treatment (ART) clinics across five districts in the Free State Province of South Africa. Each of these patients was assigned to one of the following groups: a control group receiving standard care, a group receiving additional biweekly PAS or a group receiving PAS and nutritional support. Latent cross-lagged modelling (Mplus) was used to analyse the impact of PAS and the family environment on the level of hope in PLWHA.

**Results:** The results of the study indicate that neither PAS nor the family environment has a direct effect on the level of hope in PLWHA. Subsequent analysis reveals a positive significant interaction between family functioning and PAS at the second follow-up, indicating that better family functioning increases the positive effect of PAS on the state of hope in PLWHA.

**Conclusions:** The interplay between well-functioning families and external PAS generates higher levels of hope, which is an essential dimension in the success of lifelong treatment. This study provides additional insight into the important role played by family dynamics in HIV/AIDS care, and it underscores the need for PAS interventions that are sensitive to the contexts in which they are implemented.