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POSITIONING HIV AND COMMUNICATIONS: NARRATIVES OF BLACK AFRICAN HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE HIV POSITIVE PARTNER IN THE UK

Kemoh Rogers

University of East Anglia, UK

Background: Through effective use of anti-HIV medications, stable relationships containing one HIV positive partner (Serodiscordant Relationships (SdRs)) have emerged and are increasing in number and significance. Black African heterosexual men and women are among the high HIV epidemic populations in the UK although some do not know about their HIV positive status. Hence, a substantial number of people in the black African community might have a partner with non-identical HIV status. However, limited studies have explored the lived experiences and support needs of Black African couples in known SdRs. Specifically, the positions of HIV in SdRs and how these are reflected in communications about HIV have not been described. Therefore, this proposed oral presentation explores the relative positions of HIV within SdRs and how these relate to couples' communications about HIV.

Methods: Following multi-centre ethical approval, 25 in-depth interviews were conducted with 19 heterosexual participants from black African backgrounds in SdRs from three London genitourinary medicines (GUM) clinics. Age range of participants was 30-58 years (12 females (30-45), 7 males (31-58)). MAXQDA software was used for data storage and retrieval. Data was analysed through phenomenological reflection and writing.

Results: Significant themes emerged from this study including positioning of HIV and communications between couples. This presentation shows that the positions HIV occupy in SdRs are conceptualised in an ordinal continuum from less prominence to greater prominence but positioning does not represent functional or dysfunctional modes of managing HIV within SdRs.

Discussions: The relative positions HIV occupy is contextualised in the context of 'erasing and protecting' the difference between HIV positive and negative partners in SdRs.

Implications for nursing practice: The implications for providing support and information for Black African heterosexual couples are considered, particularly with potential benefits of greater engagement with both sero-negative and positive partners.

Biography

Kemoh Rogers has completed his PhD from City University, London in 2016. He is a Senior Lecturer in Nursing Sciences, School of Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of East Anglia, Norwich. He has made several presentations at national and international conferences.

Kemoh.Rogers@uea.ac.uk