

Staff attrition among community health workers in home-based care programmes for people living with HIV and AIDS in western Kenya

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Abstract:

Objectives: This paper examines trends and underlying causes of attrition among volunteer community health workers in home-based care for people living with HIV and AIDS in western Kenya. **Methods:** Ethnographic data were collected between January and November 2006 through participant observation, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with 30 CHWs, NGO staff and health care providers and 70 PLWHA. **Results:** An attrition rate of 33% was observed among the CHWs. The reasons for dropout included: the cultural environment within which CHWs operated; lack of adequate support from area NGOs; poor selection criteria for CHWs; and power differences between NGO officials and CHWs which fostered lack of transparency in the NGOs' operations. **Conclusions:** In order to achieve well-functioning and sustainable HBC services, factors which influence retention/dropout of CHWs should be addressed taking into account the socio-cultural, programmatic and economic contexts within which CHW activities are implemented