HIV Care Provision: Final Year Nursing Students’ Readiness at a Western Cape University, South Africa

**Introduction**
SA has a steady increase in the number of people living with HIV, with a prevalence of 13.06%, and 7.52 million people living with HIV by end of 2018. This puts a burden on the health care system. Nurses are an integral part in the provision of care to people living with HIV (PLWHIV), and their training is meant to prepare them to be ready for such task. The study’s purpose was to determine the readiness level of final year nursing students for the provision of HIV care in one of Western Cape nursing training institutions.

**Readiness** = Willingness + confidence + knowledge

**Methodology**
Cross-sectional survey design was applied. An all-inclusive sample size of 103 final year nursing students at a nursing institution in the Western Cape, South Africa responded. A questionnaire covering readiness on the 4 aspects of HIV care was used. Validity and reliability were ensured. All ethical principles were adhered to.

**Results**
Of the respondents 77.2% were below the age of 29 years, with 52% being less than 25 years of age, and 89.3% were female.
Up to 15% had previous experience in health care before the nursing programme, and 41% had a family member or co-worker living with HIV.
Only 68% were willing to initiate ART with fewer (57.3%) feeling confident to do so.
Up to 81% of respondents were willing to treat opportunistic infections (OIs); but only 68% were confident to do so.
Over 90% were willing and confident to conduct an HIV test. Up to 92% of the students had correct knowledge on preventative measures. They were more willing than confident.

**Discussion & Conclusion**
The final year nursing students are more willing than confident, and scored low on knowledge level for all the 4 aspects of HIV care. Some knowledge gaps were identified. This is a reflection of their status as novice in the nursing profession, and indicates need to improve their knowledge.
HIV management knowledge was higher compared to knowledge of other aspects of HIV care, and the HEI can strengthen those areas. Overall readiness level is at a moderate level, giving an indication that once knowledge level is increased, their provision of HIV care and management after graduation will be appropriate. Student nurses need more learning opportunities in HIV care and management to improve their confidence.

**Overall readiness scores:*** less than 60: very low; 60-69: low; 70-79: moderate; over 79%: high level of readiness

**HIV care aspects framework – Adapted from Knebel et al. (2008)***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIV care aspects</th>
<th>Willingness level</th>
<th>Confidence level</th>
<th>Knowledge level</th>
<th>Overall per HIV care aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. HIV prevention</td>
<td>88.3% High</td>
<td>84.1% High</td>
<td>47.5% Very low</td>
<td>73.3% Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Health promotion for PLWH</td>
<td>86% High</td>
<td>80.9% High</td>
<td>53.1% Very low</td>
<td>73.3% Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evaluation of health status for PLWH</td>
<td>85.7% High</td>
<td>78.9% Moderate</td>
<td>51.1% Very low</td>
<td>71.9% Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. HIV management</td>
<td>76.6% Moderate</td>
<td>70.2% Moderate</td>
<td>69% Low</td>
<td>71.9% Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall readiness</td>
<td>84.1% High</td>
<td>78.5% Moderate</td>
<td>55.1% Very Low</td>
<td>73% Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**

**Validity & Reliability**
Validity: 2 experts have validated the developed questionnaire.
Reliability: Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated for all aspects.

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