



International Center *for* Equal Healthcare Access
The global leader in clinical skills rapid transfer to emerging nations

Twentieth Anniversary ANAC Conference

November 8-11, 2007 ★ Swan and Dolphin Hotel ★ Orlando, FL

Title: Nurse Clinical Mentors: transferring knowledge on clinic management and infection control to resource-poor settings dramatically increases number of patients accessing HIV care across Africa and Asia

Learning Objectives:

- Recount the dramatic impact Western nurse clinical mentors have on creating access to HIV care for patients by improving clinic management and operational systems in clinics in resource-poor countries
- Review the role of nurse clinical mentors in improving the ability of local health providers to implement effective infection control procedures and universal precautions in HIV health clinics in developing countries

Background

HIV/AIDS treatment programs are in place in many developing countries. Affordable antiretrovirals are increasingly available and governments are recognizing the importance of providing didactic training on HIV/AIDS to health workers. As HIV treatment programs grow, the scale-up of clinic management operations and infection control procedures remain equally essential to sustain the growing numbers of HIV patients receiving care. Western nurses providing hands-on HIV mentoring to local nurses are an invaluable resource helping create systems of sustainable HIV practice.

Purpose

Nurse clinical mentors rapidly improve clinic systems and infection control procedures to help create access to HIV care for patients in developing countries.

Methods

Through ICEHA's clinical mentoring program, health workers in developing countries gain the practical skills needed to provide care and manage patients on treatment. Nurse clinical mentors provide hands-on coaching to local colleagues on topics including clinic flow, patient intake, patient tracking and chart management, stock management, and infection control. Assessments of local health providers' skills are conducted at the beginning and end of mentor assignments to determine change over time.

Conclusions

Nurse clinical mentors dramatically improve access to and quality of HIV care in clinics in developing countries with a particularly strong emphasis on improving clinic management and infection control procedures. ICEHA nurse mentors have worked in Cambodia, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Rwanda, South Africa, and Vietnam. As a result of nurse clinical mentoring in these countries, extraordinary improvement has been seen in the ability of local providers to perform effective patient intake, coordinate optimal clinic flow, develop and manage patient tracking systems, manage stock of medications and supplies, and ensure effective infection control. These improvements have had a dramatic impact on patient care and have enabled clinics to manage increasing numbers of patients on treatment with existing healthcare staff.

Implications for practice

Clinical mentoring improves HIV nursing practice in developing countries by giving local nurses the skills needed to care for patients and manage clinics. In addition, skills that nurse clinical mentors bring back home include: greater ability to use resources effectively, better understanding of caring for vulnerable populations, and renewed commitment to caring for HIV patients.

Authors: M. Famiglietti, J. Ahlrich, K. Graves-Abe, K. Glaser, M. Charles, B. Boyle