



Clinical mentoring is a high impact component of the national strategy to scale-up ART in Lesotho

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Issue

A local healthcare workforce with clinical expertise is essential for large scale ART programs yet is often absent where ART is new and human resources are scarce as in Lesotho:

- HIV prevalence of 23.6%
- 38 physicians in the public sector

Lessons Learned

In Lesotho, clinical mentoring effectively accelerates ART scale-up:

- One clinic, after 6 weeks of clinical mentoring, tripled the number of patients enrolled on ART each week to more than 10/week
- Within 3 weeks, nurses in settings with mentoring can correctly initiate and monitor ART according to national guidelines
- Optimization occurs when clinical mentoring is tailored to the specific needs of the national ART program
- Series of clinical mentoring teams at a setting reinforces skills
- Benefits of clinical mentoring are immediate, sustainable and effective

Description

Lesotho is strengthening its workforce through a national clinical mentoring program. Between November 2005 – February 2006, 21 Basotho doctors and nurses at 7 facilities received mentoring from 10 clinical mentors.

Program characteristics:

- Clinical mentors are Western-trained health professionals with HIV/AIDS treatment experience and include physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants
- Mentors reinforce Ministry of Health & Social Welfare (MOHSW) didactic HIV training through on-site teaching and coaching
- The International Center for Equal Healthcare Access (ICEHA) selects and prepares the clinical mentors pre-deployment
- The Clinton Foundation HIV/AIDS Initiative and MOHSW provide in-country program management including preparation of sites to be mentored and monitoring progress



Clinical Mentors, May 2006

Recommendations

Clinical mentoring is an effective method to rapidly develop HIV/AIDS expertise among medical professionals with limited training and experience in HIV in resource limited settings.