



Evaluating a Peer-Support Network Intervention to Enhance Medication Adherence in Young Adults with HIV in Windhoek, Namibia: A Methodological Protocol

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Abstract

Young adults living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa face challenges with sustained antiretroviral therapy adherence. Peer-support interventions are promising, but rigorous methodological protocols for their evaluation in specific urban settings like Windhoek, Namibia, are needed. This methodology article presents the protocol for evaluating a structured peer-support network intervention aimed at improving antiretroviral therapy adherence among young adults with HIV in Windhoek. Its primary objective is to detail the study design, intervention components, and mixed-methods evaluation framework. The protocol describes a quasi-experimental, longitudinal study with a comparison group. Participants will be recruited from public health clinics. The intervention group will receive a trained peer-mentor programme alongside standard care for 12 months. Adherence will be measured using pharmacy refill data, self-report, and viral load suppression. Quantitative surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews will assess psychosocial outcomes and implementation processes. As a protocol paper, this article presents no empirical results. The planned analysis will compare adherence rates between groups, with the primary outcome being the proportion of participants achieving high levels of medication adherence at 12 months. This protocol offers a detailed methodological blueprint for a contextually relevant evaluation. It is designed to generate rigorous evidence on the intervention's effectiveness and implementation, contributing to methodological approaches for peer-support research in public health. Future research should employ similar mixed-methods frameworks to capture both outcomes and experiential data. Programme planners may consider this methodology when designing peer-support initiatives in comparable settings. HIV, medication adherence, peer support, young adults, methodology, protocol, Namibia, antiretroviral therapy This protocol contributes a structured methodological approach for evaluating peer-support interventions in a specific urban African context, detailing a mixed-methods framework to assess both clinical effectiveness and implementation processes.

Keywords: *Peer support, Medication adherence, Young adults, Sub-Saharan Africa, Implementation science, Mixed-methods, Antiretroviral therapy*

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