



Retention Rates in Community-Based HIV/AIDS Screening Programmes in Democratic Republic of Congo Cities,

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Abstract

Community-based HIV/AIDS screening programmes have been implemented in various African cities to reduce the burden of the disease and improve public health outcomes. The study employed participant observation and semi-structured interviews with community members and programme staff to understand the effectiveness and challenges faced by these screening initiatives. Retention rates varied significantly across different communities, ranging from 70% in urban areas to 45% in rural settings. Themes of stigma and accessibility were recurrent throughout participant narratives. While retention varies geographically, the study highlights critical issues such as community engagement and resource availability that impact programme success. Programmes should prioritise building trust with communities through culturally sensitive outreach strategies to enhance long-term participation.

Keywords: *African geography, community engagement, ethnography, qualitative research, public health outcomes, rural-urban disparities, social mobilization*

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