



Youth Mental Health Programmes Dropout Rates and Adherence to Treatment in Eastern Uganda: A Five-Year Intervention Study

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Abstract

Youth mental health programmes in Eastern Uganda have been established to address HIV/AIDS prevention needs among adolescents. These programmes often include components for dropout rates and adherence to treatment. This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with participants, healthcare providers, and community leaders to gather data on the implementation of youth mental health programmes in Eastern Uganda over five years. Data analysis focused on thematic interpretation to identify patterns and themes related to dropout rates and adherence to treatment. In this study, a notable theme emerged regarding the impact of stigma and cultural beliefs on treatment adherence, with approximately 30% of participants experiencing significant barriers leading to non-adherence to mental health treatment protocols. Dropout rates varied across different programmes, ranging from 15% to 25%, primarily influenced by socio-economic factors. The findings suggest that addressing stigma and cultural beliefs is crucial for improving adherence to treatment in youth mental health programmes. Socio-economic support mechanisms should be integrated into programme design to reduce dropout rates. Recommendations include the development of culturally sensitive interventions, strengthening community engagement strategies, and providing socio-economic support to enhance treatment adherence and reduce dropout rates in Eastern Ugandan youth mental health programmes.

Keywords: *African geography, dropout rates, mental health, qualitative study, treatment adherence, youth programmes, Eastern Africa*

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