

7th World Congress on

PUBLIC HEALTH, NUTRITION & EPIDEMIOLOGY

May 15-16, 2019 Singapore

Risks and barriers to treatment among HIV-positive individuals that patronize traditional healers in sub-Saharan Africa**Anastasia Lendel and Muktar Aliyu**
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Background & Aim: Traditional healers are the first healthcare option for 70% of persons in sub-Saharan Africa. This review summarizes the risk factors associated with visiting a traditional healer for people living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

Method: An electronic search of PubMed, MEDLINE, Ovid and other online databases were conducted. The search was restricted to articles published in English from 1990-2019. The search terms used were HIV, AIDS and traditional medicine or traditional healing, sub-Saharan Africa and antiretroviral therapy or ART. Articles were evaluated for relevance by reading their abstract. The search yielded a total of 35 articles.

Results: Visiting a traditional healer was associated with delay in HIV testing and initiating Antiretroviral Treatment (ART). Patronizing traditional healers is also associated with an increased risk of abandoning ART or being lost to follow up. Risks associated with traditional healer visits included potential drug interactions between traditional medicines and ART and exposure to blood and body fluids *via* unsterilized instruments, which places the traditional healer at risk as well.

Conclusion: There is a need for formal training programs for traditional healers, focused on reducing occupational hazards for healers and methods of linking patients to ART programs. These training programs require respectful cooperation and mutual education between traditional healers and biomedical health practitioners. It is also recommended establishing regulatory systems such as traditional healer registration councils in locations that have not already done so.

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