

## COPING STRATEGIES AMONG PRIMARY CAREGIVERS OF HIV/AIDS INFECTED INDIVIDUALS

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**Introduction:** Care giving for the HIV/AIDS individual in developing countries has become the responsibility of the family, and an identified primary care giver amongst them, who is subjected to enormous stress in fulfilling that role. Those who adopt healthy coping strategies, render better care to their wards, improving their quality of life.

**Aims:** To study the coping styles among primary caregivers of HIV/AIDS patients.

**Objectives:** To assess patterns of coping among primary caregivers of patients infected with HIV/ AIDS.

**Methods:** A cross sectional study design was employed. 60 consecutive patients were recruited for the study after consent, from the ART centre of a tertiary care hospital. Socio demographic details were collected, and coping strategies assessed using Active behavioral, Active cognitive and Avoidance coping strategies Scale (Billings & Moos, 1984).

**Results:** Three patterns of coping were used. Avoidance as a strategy was predominant in older care givers, males, bread winners, influenced by their age, gender and financial independence, respectively. Professionally employed individuals used more coping strategies while those with lower levels of education and employment used fewer strategies, probably an indication of their access to information regarding the illness. Primary carers, for less than a year, used more avoidance; those for more than five years used more cognitive strategies, those between these groups used more behavioral ones.

**Conclusion:** Intervention for those primary care givers who employ fewer coping strategies, predominantly avoidance would help improving the quality of care rendered to the afflicted individuals and thereby their quality of life.