Nurses Ease Shortage of HIV/AIDS Doctors

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Researchers at the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City revealed that people living with HIV in the care of trained nurses faired just as well—if not better—than those treated by doctors, Reuters reports.

Areas with high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates often face shortages of doctors. In two separate studies, researchers attempted “task-shifting” by replacing doctors in Mozambique and Swaziland with trained nurses to manage HIV-positive patients on antiretroviral regimens.

“It’s a partial answer…but this is a way of helping, particularly in settings where prevalence is so high,” said Ciaren Humphreys, a public health consultant who spearheaded the Swaziland study.

In both groups, patients remained medically stable after one year, but, according to Humphreys, those who visited nurse-led clinics exhibited more confidence with managing the virus compared to those who underwent therapy under doctors’ care in hospitals.

“They get holistic care at the local clinic level with people they know and [are] comfortable with,” Humphreys said.

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