Study Looks at Ways to Help Mothers in India with HIV/AIDS

Women in India who contract HIV face a number of obstacles in obtaining treatment, but researchers from the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) hope education and stronger networks of support can improve the situation.

“Perceptions in Health Care Needs of HIV-Positive Mothers in India” appears in the most recent issue of Progress in Community Health Partnerships, which is published by the Johns Hopkins University Press. UCLA School of Nursing faculty members Adeline Nyamathi, Ph.D., Beena Thomas, Ph.D., and Barbara Greengold, Ph.D., partnered in the study with Indian physician Soumya Swaminathan, M.D., who is based at the Tuberculosis Research Centre in Chennai, India.

The study relied on interviews of HIV-infected women at a Chennai hospital and clinic. The researchers sought to use this information to tailor intervention programs for the nearly 1,000,000 women of child-bearing age in India who are HIV-positive, commonly referred to mothers living with HIV/Aids (MLH).

“MLH often find themselves with little time to devote to their own health problems and moreover lack information about HIV disease progression,” the study says. Because of family responsibilities and social stigmas, the women often neglect their disease.

The women in the study told researchers that counseling and concerned physicians would make living with the disease much easier. They also wanted more education on HIV/AIDS for both them and their doctors to encourage a better understanding of the disease.

“Future interventions need to be targeted so that greater awareness of HIV/AIDS and how it impacts the lives of all those who are positive or live with those who are positive is understood,” the report concludes.

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