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Dilemma for choosing exclusive replacement feeding for HIV positive mothers of infants at a public hospital in Gauteng province**Lebitsi Modiba**

University of South Africa, South Africa

The burden of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is epidemic and greatest in poor resource settings. In particular, 22.5 million of the 33.2 million individuals infected with HIV globally live in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). South Africa is having a large number of mothers with this burden of HIV infection. Infant feeding in communities with a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS has a potential challenge for mothers who must ultimately decide how to feed their infants within the context that constrain their choices. The purpose of this study was to determine challenges of HIV-positive mothers on exclusive replacement feeding. A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual study was undertaken to examine the experiences of HIV positive mothers on the exclusive formula feeding. Five themes emerged from this study, namely: (1) Mothers knowledge of recommended feeding practices, (2) fear of disclosure due to stigma and (3) limited support, (4) social isolation and (5) mother's strategies. The shame associated with HIV is a major obstacle to its prevention and the stigma that surrounds people is compounded by discrimination against women leading to women avoiding testing and treatment services for fear of abandonment and other repercussions from husbands, families and communities and health providers. Even if they contacted this from the husbands, women are sometimes blamed for bringing AIDS home and may face violence or ostracism as a result. Counseling should seek to empower women with skills and strategies to navigate conflicting pressures, social norms, stigma and any negative interactions with their partners, families, physicians and communities.

modiblm@unisa.ac.za