

HIV disclosure among HIV-affected families in Northeastern Thailand

People living with HIV (PLH) face tremendous physical, psychological and social stressors. Coping with these stressors associated with HIV may be influenced, in part, by decisions made on whether, why, to whom and how PLH disclose their diagnosis to others. PLH must weigh the pros and cons of disclosure and nondisclosure, and the process, in general, has been framed as an individual choice. However, in many countries, including Thailand, HIV disclosure may not be considered as an individual matter.

The impact of HIV radiates throughout the family, including HIV disclosure. Thailand has been extremely successful in mounting individual-based interventions to combat HIV/AIDS. With the advent of anti-retroviral (ARV) therapy provision in Thailand, HIV is becoming a chronic illness, where PLH can manage their illness and live for a long time. Given this shift of HIV as a chronic illness, the positive benefits of HIV disclosure in Thailand is becoming more salient. HIV disclosure is an important stressor in Thailand. However, empirical investigations of the HIV disclosure decision making process in Thailand are limited. The goal of this pilot study is to explore the concerns, barriers and motivators around HIV disclosure among HIV affected families in Thailand. This study will provide important information for the next research phase of developing and implementing an intervention to address HIV disclosure among HIV-affected families in Thailand.

The proposed study will proceed in two phases. In Phase 1, formative research will be conducted using focus groups with 20 PLH, 20 family members, and 5 service providers to explore and identify the concerns, barriers and motivators around HIV disclosure. Based on the factors identified from Phase 1, we will examine the levels of social, environmental, and cultural factors associated with HIV disclosure by conducting face-face interviews with 50 PLH. The specific aims of the proposed study are:

1. To explore and identify social, environmental and cultural concerns, barriers and motivators around HIV disclosure from the perspectives of PLH, family members, and service providers.
2. To examine the levels of social, environmental, and cultural factors associated with HIV disclosure in Thailand.