

# Effect of economic strengthening on treatment outcome among people living with HIV

A. Haji<sup>1</sup>, W. Endale<sup>2</sup>, A. Alemayehu<sup>3</sup>, T. Deksis<sup>4</sup>, D. Halefom<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mekdim Ethiopia National Association- USAID FFHPCT, Quality Improvement, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, <sup>2</sup>Mekdim Ethiopia National Association- USAID FFHPCT, Knowledge management, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, <sup>3</sup>Mekdim Ethiopia National Association- USAID FFHPCT, Chief of Party, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, <sup>4</sup>Mekdim Ethiopia National Association- USAID FFHPCT, OVC Service, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, <sup>5</sup>Mekdim Ethiopia National Association- USAID FFHPCT, Monitoring and Evaluation, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Category:** E8: Integration of HIV services with other health and support services

**Country of research:** Ethiopia

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**Background:** In resource-constrained settings, poor economic circumstances may pose a significant challenge to the success of antiretroviral treatment (ART) outcomes. Economic strengthening is when a group of 10-25 people save together and take loans from savings either to support household needs or to generate income. We aimed to assess the effect of economic strengthening on HIV care and treatment outcomes among people living with HIV in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**Methods:** An institutional-based retrospective cohort study design was conducted on 273 people living with HIV/AIDS in public health facilities of Addis Ababa, followed from June 2021 to November 2022. Study participants who were active and on follow-up during this study period were selected using a systematic random sampling technique. Sociodemographic, treatment, clinical, adherence, economic strengthening status and viral load data were extracted from electronic medical records, entered and analyzed with SPSS 26. Multivariate logistic regression analysis was conducted to test the main hypothesis at a 95% CI with  $P < 0.05$ .

**Results:** The mean age of the respondents was 40 years with a standard deviation of 8 years. Eighty-seven percent of the study participants were successful in achieving viral suppression (80.30% vs 94.80%) Economic strengthening was also associated with higher odds of viral load suppression (less than 50 copies/ml) with (AOR 4.52, 95% CI 1.90–10.80  $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, economic strengthening was also associated with higher odds of ART adherence with (AOR 4.89, 95% CI 1.64–14.29,  $p < 0.001$ )

**Conclusions:** Economic strengthening is associated with good adherence to HIV treatment and viral load suppression. Intervention research is needed to determine the extent to which economic strengthening is causally associated with improved HIV treatment outcomes and to identify the most effective policies and programs to improve economic status and health

**Ethical research declaration:** Yes

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