

Van Dyk, A (2010). HIV/AIDS Care and Counseling - A Multidisciplinary Approach. 4th ed. Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa (Pty) Ltd, pp 512.

Reviewed by Simeon Kabigumila

The author, Professor Alta van Dyk, is a professional nurse, psychologist, HIV/AIDS counselor and educationist. She is an associate professor at the University of South Africa (UNISA) where she teaches psychology and courses in HIV/AIDS care and counseling. Her extensive clinical experience has made her a respected authority on HIV/AIDS intervention strategies.

The book

This is the fourth edition which is an extensive update and revision of the third edition. It incorporates proven prevention and treatment authorities with conventional theories of care. For those who are new in the field of HIV/AIDS, the book provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of the science behind the disease as well as health management models for PLWAs. The main emphasis in this book is that all people living with HIV/AIDS must be given an equal opportunity to experience a healthy and fulfilling life. The writer of this book has this to say "I dedicate this book to every one who is infected with and affected by HIV and AIDS. Your courage, determination, compassion and hope inspire us all" (2010:ii). The book with 512 pages contains five (5) parts with a total of twenty one (21) chapters as follows:

Chapter One: Offers a definition of HIV and AIDS and looks at the history of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It explains the unique characteristics of the HIV virus and how it affects the human immune systems and explores the latest development in the search for vaccine.

Chapter Two: examines how the virus is transmitted via sexual intercourse and contaminated blood and how it may be transmitted from mother to baby.

Chapter Three: describes and discusses the symptoms of HIV infections. In fact the whole chapter is on the progression from HIV to AIDS.

Chapter Four: describes the diagnosis of HIV. Methods for testing HIV are discussed.

Chapter Five: This is the last chapter in part one of the book. It looks at the management of HIV infection and AIDS and the use of ARVs.

Chapter Six: It deals with or reviews various theories that describe the conditions needed for people to change their behavior. Voluntary HIV counseling and testing (VCT) as an HIV prevention is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Seven: gives practical advice on how to prevent HIV infection. Safe, safer and unsafe sexual practices are all discussed, and in numerous ideas and tips are given to the clients.

Chapter Eight: discusses HIV/AIDS education and life skills training for children.

Chapter Nine: The premise of this chapter is that HIV/AIDS programmes will never succeed in Africa if we do not take the traditional African world- view into account.

Chapter Ten: discusses some basic counseling principles and skills. The practical guidelines for cross- cultural counseling are given.

Chapter Eleven: Basic principles of pre- and post-HIV test counseling are discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, helpful guidelines and hints are given on questions to ask, information to provide, and on how to handle important issues of informed consent and confidentiality.

Chapter Twelve: discusses specific issues in the lives of people living with HIV/AIDS. Disclosure, anxiety, depression and suicidal feelings are discussed. Specific approaches to counseling and couple counseling are addressed.

Chapter Thirteen: It reviews the principles of bereavement counseling.

Chapter Fourteen: Discusses about spiritual counseling.

Chapter Fifteen: The importance of family and community involvement in the care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS is discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Sixteen: Discusses the plight of Africa's AIDS orphans and other children made vulnerable by the disease, and strategies or models for the care of orphaned children.

Chapter Seventeen: Deals with the application of universal precautions to prevent HIV infection in various health care setting.

Chapter Eighteen: Focuses on strengthening the immune system, the promotion of general health, nutrition and the nursing care of general health.

Chapter Nineteen: The issue of care for caregivers is discussed

Chapter Twenty: Discusses the basic rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. It examines specific applications of the law in the work place. FAQs asked by caregivers, and counselors are highlighted. Special attention is given to the rights of women and children.

Chapter Twenty One: This is the final chapter of the book. It discusses HIV/AIDS management in the work place. Recommendations are made on how to develop effective management and policy plans that take the needs of HIV-positive people into account.

The book has many chapters (21). It is advised that in the next edition (5th edition) professor Alta van Dyk need to condense it to lesser chapters. Professor Alta also needs to be advised to write on a scientific research on HIV/AIDS today.

This book deserves to be read by all people affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. It is an important book, beautifully written and produced and with a most commendable absence of minor inaccuracies and misprints which would so easily have crept into a work of such scope and diversity. Both the writer of the book and publisher are to be congratulated on such an achievement. It is simple and straight forward language and the use of the case study method in presenting much of it, makes it very readable. It is suitable for counselors, nurses, home based care givers, social workers, university students, spiritual workers, volunteers as well as people living with HIV/AIDS, and the beloved ones. I welcome it as one more contribution to the more growing collection of literature on HIV/AIDS. Many will find it stimulating and rewarding to read. All in all, however, this is useful and thought-provoking book.

Author's description

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