

HIV/AIDS RESEARCH AREAS IN ORAL HEALTH –*Kikwila. E. N*

Oral health professionals in Tanzania have played insignificant role in the fight of HIV/AIDS as seen by the few research reports in area of “Oral Health and HIV/AIDS”. It is high time that Oral Health Professionals join the other health professionals in the fight of this deadly disease.

There are many areas that Oral Health Professionals could research on to assist in the fight of HIV/AIDS. Three obvious areas need to be addressed as a matter of urgency:

**Research Issue 1: Provision of oral care to systemic diseases manifesting in the oral cavity**

**Justification**

Effective management of oral lesions improves well being of AIDS patients

Four research questions related to research issue 1:

One, what prophylactic measures ensure healthy oral cavity for HIV/AIDS patients? Two, what drug should Tanzanian dental clinics use for control of other soft tissue lesions? Three what drug should Tanzanian dental clinics use for control of oral fungi? and Four, what drugs should Tanzanian dental clinics use for control of Xerostomia (dry mouth)?

**Research Issue 2: Prevention of HIV transmission in dental clinics**

**Justification:** Most of the dental treatment procedures are invasive, and pose high risk of transmission of blood borne infectious diseases including HIV

Six research questions are seen in relation to research Issue 2:

One, are dental health workers aware of risks they are in during their practice? Two, are dental health workers conversant with international standards of infection control in dental practice? Three, are patients aware that they may be infected with HIV in dental clinic settings? Four, are dental health workers practicing the international standards of infection control in dental practice? Five, can we live to those standards OR do we need to modify them to suite our environment? And six, what is the existing quality control measures to ensure practice and adherence to these standards?

**Research Issue 3: Ethical Issues in relation to People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)**

**Justification:**

PLWHA need be treated just like any other person, thus confidentiality on their health status is a basic human right

**Research questions:**

One, how are oral health workers handling PLWHA in relation to confidentiality?  
Two, are there any discriminations?