

VIH-TAVIE™ Relational Model of Engagement: Creating Meaningful Connections to Empower People Living with HIV via a Virtual Nursing Intervention

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Abstract. The use of information and communication technologies for designing web-based nursing interventions is growing exponentially. Despite the interest devoted to such approaches, little is known about their foundational principles and the way they translate into virtual nursing practice to generate meaningful engagement with patients. VIH-TAVIE™ is a virtual nursing intervention aiming to empower people living with HIV to help them in managing their antiretroviral therapy. Here we present VIH-TAVIE™ relational model of engagement – its core components informed by interview data with patients and a virtual nurse: building a virtual presence founded on caring relational principles and values; creating a caring environment where patients feel safe, supported and respected; stimulating patients' engagement by offering supportive and tailored messages; transposing nursing communication skills into a virtual practice to build trust and reciprocal relationships. This study suggests that empowering connections can develop between a nurse and a patient within a caring virtual environment.

Keywords. virtual nursing intervention, people living with HIV, engagement, caring interactions, qualitative research, information and communication technologies

1. Introduction

The use of Information and communication technologies (ICTs) for designing web-based nursing interventions is growing exponentially. This involves the development of new relational approaches and abilities for nurses to meaningfully engage with patients. Despite the interest devoted to such approaches, little is known about their foundational relational principles and the way they translate into virtual nursing practice to generate meaningful engagement with patients. VIH-TAVIE™ is a virtual nursing intervention aiming to empower people living with HIV (PLHIV) to help them in managing their antiretroviral therapy. This consists of four virtual interactive computer sessions delivered by a nurse who guides PLHIV through a learning process in an asynchronous way, through video. The intervention was developed [1, 2] and evaluated using a mixed

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methods research design to test its effectiveness in optimizing treatment adherence for PLHIV [3] and to describe the experience of patients who participated in the intervention [4]. The aim of this work is to present VIH-TAVIETM relational model of engagement – its core components and principles informed by a patient and nurse perspective.

2. Methods

We report on a secondary data analysis undertaken as part of VIH-TAVIETM qualitative research stream. Interview data with patients (n=26) are used to further explore one of the five themes identified in the primary qualitative research [4] (i.e. virtual nurse humanizes experience of the computer-delivered intervention) to pinpoint key components of meaningful interactions between PLHIV and the virtual nurse. Informal discussions with the nurse who participated in delivering the intervention helped to better understand how these components translate into virtual nursing practice. Data is subjected to qualitative thematic analysis. Findings are articulated in the form of a model which incorporates the patients' and virtual nurse's perspectives.

3. Results

Core inter-related components characterize VIH-TAVIETM relational model of engagement: building a virtual presence that is founded on caring relational principles and values; creating a caring environment where patients feel safe, supported and respected; placing patients' needs at the centre of the interactions by providing educational messages adapted with regards to unique responses from participants; stimulating patients' engagement by offering supportive messages aimed at developing a positive vision of themselves and reinforcing their current abilities at managing their treatment; transposing nursing communication skills into a virtual practice to build trust and reciprocal relationships with patients (e.g. eye contact with the camera, tone of the voice, language adapted to patients' health literacy).

4. Discussion

This study sheds light on key components of a relational model of engagement informed by a patient and nurse perspective to generate caring interactions in the context of a virtual nursing intervention dedicated to PLHIV. VIH-TAVIETM relational model of engagement suggests that empowering connections can develop between a nurse and a patient within a positive virtual environment.

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