

Self-perceived Challenges of Lay Counselors Implementing Voluntary Counseling and Testing in Mopani District, Limpopo Province and South Africa

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ABSTRACT The demand for counselling and testing for Human Immune Virus (HIV) services is increasing in South Africa. The purpose of the paper was to identify the challenges faced by lay counsellors in implementing VCT in the health facilities of Mopani District Limpopo Province, South Africa. Qualitative research design was used to collect the data. The population consisted of 60 lay counsellors in the Greater-Tzaneen, Greater Letaba and Ba-Phalaborwa municipalities. Data was collected through semi-structured interview guide for focus group discussions. Data was analysed qualitatively through the open coding. The results revealed that lay counsellors experienced challenges when implementing the VCT programme, clients denying their HIV positive status and lack of counselling skills. Counselling aspects such as explaining the counselling process, the issue of pre-testing and post-testing, the importance of consent forms and how tests are conducted, are important processes that counsellors should effectively use for successful counselling sessions.