

Responding to the HIV pandemic: the power of an academic medical partnership

Einterz, RM; Kimaiyo, S; Mengech, HN; Khwa-Otsyula, BO; Esamai, F; Quigley, F; Mamlin, JJ
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Abstract:

Partnerships between academic medical center (AMCs) in North America and the developing world are uniquely capable of fulfilling the tripartite needs of care, training, and research required to address health care crises in the developing world. Moreover, the institutional resources and credibility of AMCs can provide the foundation to build systems of care with long-term sustainability, even in resource-poor settings. The authors describe a partnership between Indiana University School of Medicine and Moi University and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Kenya that demonstrates the power of an academic medical partnership in its response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa. Through the Academic Model for the Prevention and Treatment of HIV/AIDS, the partnership currently treats over 40,000 HIV-positive patients at 19 urban and rural sites in western Kenya, now enrolls nearly 2,000 new HIV positive patients every month, feeds up to 30,000 people weekly, enables economic security, fosters HIV prevention, tests more than 25,000 pregnant women annually for HIV, engages communities, and is developing a robust electronic information system. The partnership evolved from a program of limited size and a focus on general internal medicine into one of the largest and most comprehensive HIV/AIDS-control systems in sub-Saharan Africa. The partnership's rapid increase in scale, combined with the comprehensive and long-term approach to the region's health care needs, provides a twinning model that can and should be replicated to address the shameful fact that millions are dying of preventable and treatable diseases in the developing world.