

University of Zimbabwe Clinical Epidemiology Unit launches HIV/AIDS Quality of Care Initiative (HAQOCI)

AIDS-related illness remains a major cause of disease burden in Zimbabwe and the prospects are worsening. It is estimated that two million people are infected and the prevalence among the sexually active is 25%. This disease has become the most common cause of morbidity and mortality in Zimbabwe. Life expectancy at birth has dropped from 60 years to 38 years in the last decade. Up to 80% of all hospital admissions are for AIDS-related illness. Provision of good quality care has been compromised. This is a great challenge for health providers, particularly in places with limited resources.

Against this background, the University of Zimbabwe CEU (UZ-CEU) embarked on the HIV/AIDS Quality of Care Initiative (HAQOCI) in October 2001. This initiative is being funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, with technical support from CDC-Zimbabwe AIDS Program.

The goal of the HAQOCI is to develop and implement an initiative that will improve the quality of HIV/AIDS care in Zimbabwe. Specifically, the initiative aims to: (1) develop the CEU infrastructure and capacity for the improvement of HIV/AIDS quality of care; (2) characterize the HIV/AIDS quality of care situation through consensus meetings and surveys; (3) develop, evaluate and recommend models of improved HIV/AIDS care; (4) develop clinical guidelines for HIV/AIDS care improvement; and (5) support, promote and advocate for the provision of high quality HIV/AIDS care in Zimbabwe through collaboration with the government, NGOs the private sector and other organizations involved in HIV/AIDS care.

A national meeting among stakeholders was held on February 13-15, 2002. The objectives of this meeting were to involve stakeholders in the development and early plans of HAQOCI, to identify priority areas for improving HIV/AIDS quality of care for affected and infected persons, and to identify areas that require operational and other researches related to improving HIV/AIDS Care in Zimbabwe

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