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Work environment adaptive mechanisms used by women living with HIV/AIDS in Gaborone, Botswana: a case study

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Introduction: Women living with HIV/AIDS face multiple challenges in negotiating return to work. Contexts with poor health care systems, low remuneration and unsupportive work environments may further decrease the chances of positively adapting to work environments after HIV/AIDS diagnosis.

Objective: Considering the paucity of information about how women with HIV/AIDS manage the return-to-work process and the factors that enable them to stay employed after diagnosis, this study aimed to explore the work adjustment process of women living with HIV/AIDS in Gaborone.

Method: This collective case study employed purposive sampling with maximum variation to select four participants from Gaborone's Infectious Disease Control Centre (IDCC). Data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews. Interview transcriptions were coded inductively. Confirmability was ensured through reviewing the coding and grouping of concepts until categories and themes emerged.

Findings: The adaptive mechanisms participants used included personal work strategies, positive lifestyle changes and adherence to medical treatment.

Conclusion: Study participants had developed strategies to enable their reintegrate into their work environments with varying levels of success. The findings should be used to inform programmes to facilitate positive adjustment within work environments of women returning to work following HIV/AIDS diagnosis, and to formulate government policy supporting return-to-work of this group.