

# Violence is stopping adolescents from taking lifesaving antiretrovirals



UK Research and Innovation



Cluver, L., Meinck, F., Toska, E., Orkin, FM., Hodes, R., and Sherr, L. Multitype violence exposures and adolescent antiretroviral nonadherence in South Africa. *AIDS*. 2018 May 15; 32(8):975-983.

## STUDY DETAILS



Is there a link between adolescents in Africa not taking their antiretroviral medication and the violence they experience?



Cohort of 1063 antiretroviral treatment-initiated adolescents from 53 clinics in 180 communities.



Measures and analyses:



Interviews and clinic biomarker data collected to assess the correlation between violence and ART non-adherence.

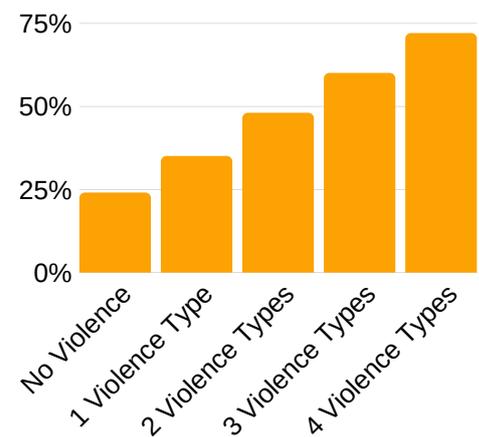
## KEY MESSAGES

- AIDS is the biggest cause of death for adolescents in Africa.
- African adolescents are the least likely population group to take their antiretroviral treatment (ART) reliably.
- Violence against young people in Africa is extremely high and increases ART non-adherence.
- Reducing violence in clinics, schools, and homes can improve adolescents' ART adherence rates, and raise their chances of survival.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

Four types of violence increased ART non-adherence: **physical abuse** from a caregiver, **witnessing domestic violence** at home, **violence from a teacher** at school, and **verbal victimisation** from clinic staff.

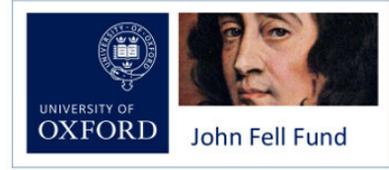
Exposure to more than one type of violence has a cumulative effect on ART non-adherence: the study showed **26%** of adolescents who did not experience any violence were likely to be non-adherent, compared to **75%** among those exposed to all four types of violence.



## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

- **Measures that mitigate, prevent, and protect adolescents living with HIV (ALHIV) from violence are essential** for these adolescents' health and survival.
- Further factors such as mental health problems, disability, sexual abuse, and partner violence among adolescents should be explored as also **potentially leading to non-adherence**.
- **Healthcare workers need targeted training and protocols** in supporting and caring for ALHIV, especially those exposed to violence at home, schools, and communities.

# THANK YOU



## CONTACT

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