

World Congress on

Health and Medical Sociology

September 19-20, 2016 Las Vegas, USA

PERCEPTIONS OF HIV/AIDS AMONG MEMBERS OF A BLACK CHURCH IN ARKANSAS: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

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African Americans continue to contract HIV/AIDS faster than other ethnic groups in the United States. In 2014, African Americans represented 54.1% of new AIDS cases and 45.2% of new HIV cases in Arkansas, representing only 15.4% of the population. The state has a significant number of patients diagnosed and not in care. In this grounded theory study, 12 participants described their perceptions of HIV/AIDS in a Black church setting. Participants' perceptions are represented in three themes and seven subthemes. Three major themes emerged: disgrace is associated with HIV/AIDS, education is a factor in participant beliefs, and community outreach of the church in HIV/AIDS prevention. Relationships between these themes and subthemes formed the basis of a theory to represent the perspectives of members of this Black church with respect to a church engaging in HIV/AIDS education and prevention efforts within the African American community. According to that theory, known as faith-based support management, when developing a prevention, education, awareness, and/or training program, leaders in faith-based organizations must organize the ministry appropriate to a hierarchy of needs. Future research could attempt to replicate this study's findings by increasing the sample size or testing the proposed theory by using a quantitative research methodology.

Biography

April Shepard graduated from the University of Arkansas, with a Master of Science degree and expects to become a Doctor of Health Administration from the University of Phoenix Fall 2016. April is an adjunct faculty professor at Webster University. April teaches health administration and health behavior classes at Webster. April has a background, as a Radiologic Technologist specializing in Computed Tomography. April currently works in Little Rock, Arkansas at Arkansas Children's Hospital as a Quality Manager. While healthcare has been a dominating part of April's career, she is passionate about helping underserved communities.

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