



Tehran University of Medical Sciences

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# **Exploring Lived Experiences of Adolescents Living with HIV positive in Ghana: A Phenomenological study**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
Ph.D. degree in Nursing**

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** In Ghana an estimated 24,806 adolescents living with HIV, a great number of this population have battled years of medication use, ill health or death of parents, and a barrage of physical and psychological difficulties that are secondary to HIV and HIV medications.

**Study aim:** To explore the meaning of living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus positive in Ghanaian adolescents

**Methodology:** Hermeneutic phenomenological approach developed by Van Manen methodology (1990) was used for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit 12 adolescents living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

**Results:** Four main themes emerged as findings of this study: Dishonour and Human Immunodeficiency virus disclosure, living with a heavy burden, Bittersweet experiences of adjusting to antiretroviral therapy, and forced to cope with Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

**Conclusion:** The myriad of problems faced by ADLHIV is as a result of the inherent beliefs of the Ghanaian society about HIV. They hold the view that anyone infected with the disease might have lived a promiscuous life. There is, therefore, the need for nurses working in the HIV clinic to understand the meaning of living with HIV positive to enable them provide individualized education to patients based on their culture and knowledge. Nurses should also provide public education through the media to help remove the stigma associated with the disease

**Keywords:** Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Adolescent, Hermeneutic, Phenomenology, Lived Experience, Ghana