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Towards the Socio-Ecological Model: Home-Based Care for OVC with HIV/AIDS in Uganda

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Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Socio-ecological vs. Biomedical
- Home-based care for OVC with HIV/AIDS
- Key issues
Health?

…the fact of ‘health’ is a cultural fact in the broadest sense of the term, which is to say at once political, economic, and social. Which is to say that it’s bound up with a certain state of individual and collective consciousness. Each period has it’s own notion of ‘normality’…

(Foucault 1983)
Perspectives on Health, Disease and Illness

- Contrasting views
- Socially constructed
- Subject to contestation
- Continual redefinition of meanings and usage
Bio-medical model of health

“... the body as *machine*, disease as the consequence of *breakdown of the machine*, and the doctor’s task as *repair of the machine...*”

(Engel 1977)

- Basis for most Western hospital medical treatment
- A useful conceptual tool for analysis of diagnostic behaviour
Assumptions of the Biomedical model

1. Disease as *deviation* from ‘*normal*’ biological functioning
2. The doctrine of *specific* etiology
3. Diseases are generic
4. Scientific neutrality and rationality of medicine
However…

- Increasing tendency for individual health to be regarded in more holistic manner
- Emphasis on treatment and care of the whole person, and not just a component subsystem
- ... the Socio-ecological model
The Socio-ecological model

- Recognises interwoven individual - environment relationship
- Reflected in WHO health definition
- Emphasis on health as a positive quality-holistic and wide in scope
- Combines the *perceptual* and the *functional/adaptational*
- Emphasises context!
HIV/AIDS and OVC

- In 2007, 33 million people lived with HIV/AIDS worldwide. 22 million of them lived in SSA. Number increased to more than 40 million people in 2008.
- HIV/AIDS affects mainly 15-49 age group resulting in increased numbers of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC).
- Some OVC are HIV positive.
- Globally, orphan number stands at more than 15 million and is forecast to rise to 24 million by 2010.

(WHO, 2008)
OVC due to AIDS by HIV prevalence for Uganda

Spectrum of Vulnerability

More complex at all levels!
HIV/AIDS care in Uganda

- In 2007 OVC number was 2.3 million (15% of the total children in the country)
- Rose to 7.5 million (46% of all children) in 2008
- Two thirds of all PLWA, HIV-related illnesses nursed at home
- Older people (aged 60 and beyond) are primary carers for PLWA and OVC

(HelpAge and WHO, 2008)
Care for OVC in Uganda

- Social welfare approach (1970s-85)
- Now tacitly acknowledged that OVC care best within extended family
- 49% of the total population access health services
- Critical issues: health care, emotional well-being, nutrition and resources
- Issues broader than health or HIV/AIDS
Key issues

- Understanding the different views
- Impact on policy
- Integrated approach?
- Whose views drive service design and delivery?
- Support / advocacy for OVC and older carers (gender aspect – older carers mainly women?)
- Context!
References

- **Help Age International** (2007) *Stronger together: Supporting the vital role played by older people in the fight against the HIV and AIDS pandemic*
- **Help Age International** (2004) *Forgotten families*: Older people as carers of orphans and vulnerable children
The end

Questions?