

2. HIV/AIDS & WATSAN - Discussion

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The link between Water and Sanitation (W&S) and HIV has not been clearly considered. During her presentation Madeleen Wegelin from KIT, stressed this fact and the importance for the recognition of this link by showing the main points in which W&S become critical for supporting HIV/AIDS interventions and treatment.

- **Highlighted points:**
 - There are about forty million HIV infected people.
 - Nowadays the level of infected women is increasing; it is higher than the level of infected men.
 - Insecurity and instability: Factors which increase the risk of HIV spread.
 - The infected people are mainly at a productive age.
 - There are without doubt direct links between HIV and W&S:
 - The need of being healthy: Drinking “safe” water.
 - Home based care: water is required – more water should be available.
 - Water is necessary for productive activities which can be done by HIV infected people.
 - More emphasis should be on the maintenance of water systems for HIV infected people. They do not have time/ resources for being in charge of it.
 - Dilemma: W & S sector vs health sector – who is responsible (HIV)

 - **Discussion:**
 - People HIV positive but still “healthy”- a lot of attention is needed for this group of people. The main reasons are:
 - High risk of HIV spread – the majority of HIV infected people, do not know that they are infected.
 - Due to HIV, they are more sensitive/ vulnerable to get infections.
 - Stigma: How to avoid it? The main point is to define actions taking into account the resistance because of stigmatisation – the actions defined should be “prudent”
 - Interventions should be designed with the community.
 - It is important to re-define the concept of “normal” so often the exception is the rule.
 - Breastfeeding – Some studies have shown that the health - risk of bottle feeding is higher than the risk of HIV infection – more babies died because of the use of “un- safe” water- the point is to stress the prevention of infection by teaching mothers how to deal with that.
 - Organisations responsibility – organisations should include policies related to HIV infected staff. Not always policies are defined at
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governmental level, therefore it is important to consider this aspect in the private sector.

- Related factors: the cost of water is an important aspect for HIV treatment.

