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Family and society through the lens of HIV/AIDS epidemic in Viet Nam

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Summary

This book deals with family dimensions of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care in Vietnam. The main hypothesis lies in the central role of the family in structuring behaviors and attitudes regarding health and social recourse, in connection with two other crucial sets of institutions in the fight against HIV/AIDS: the health sector and the support groups. This research uses data from an original study performed in 2006 and 2008 in Halong city and Đông Triều rural district. Data collection includes 414 household questionnaires, 1023 individual questionnaires and 21 focus group discussions. Comparisons are made with data from the 2005 Vietnam Population and AIDS Indicators Survey (VPAIS). Results show that family plays a central role in the search for solutions to problems linked to the epidemic. Specific characteristics of HIV positive people and members of their households show various types of vulnerability and impacts of HIV infection. Regarding prevention, family faces many impediments, among others lack of information and difficulties in ensuring communication between its members regarding sensitive topics. It intervenes in many ways in the process of testing. Disclosure of a HIV positive status often leads to new configuration of relationships. Care and treatment of health problems highlight a development of help provided by parents to their adult children and emphasizes female involvement. This contrasts with weakening spouse relationships. Through these many aspects, HIV epidemic appears as revealing family relationships as well as playing a dynamic role in their evolution in a context of restructuring health sector, developing associations and changing social norms.

Key words: Family, HIV/AIDS, prevention, care, household, Vietnam

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