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LAURA HOLLINGER: MAINTENANCE OF HOPE AMONG THAI HIV/AIDS PATIENTS IN A BUDDHIST TEMPLE-BASED CARE CENTER.  
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The intent of this study was to investigate the aspects of comprehensive care provided at a Buddhist temple-based care center, which assist the HIV/AIDS patients to maintain hope as they adapt to the physical, social, and emotional problems they are facing as a result of HIV/AIDS. In this study, hope is defined as a positive expectancy for present and future well-being, and a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

This study, which employed the qualitative data collection methods of participant observation and in-depth interview, was conducted at a care center for HIV/AIDS patients located at a Buddhist forest temple in rural Northeast Thailand.

The findings of this study revealed that the temple-based care center provided both physical care and emotional and spiritual care, which met the expressed needs of the patients regarding physical resources, acceptance, and emotional encouragement and promoted well-being and hopefulness among the patients. Provision for physical needs at the care center included facilitating access to medical care, shelter, nutrition, and nursing care. Spiritual care encompassed Buddhist principles and practices, which offered explanatory models for suffering and death and assisted in calming the hearts and minds of the patients. One unexpected finding was the involvement of a Christian-based Development Foundation offering physical resources and spiritual care. A final form of support offered by the care center took the form of educational programs, which involved the HIV/AIDS patients in educating students and community members, thereby facilitating a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.

The comprehensive care offered at the temple-based center was especially important in light of the stigmatization and rejection that the HIV/AIDS patients had reported within their communities and for some patients, within their families. The stigmatization had socioeconomic impacts by limiting work opportunities, impacted families, who were also stigmatized, and affected the patients' emotional state. The patients reported other effects of HIV/AIDS on the heart and mind, including the loss of health, loss of spouse, separation from family, social devaluation, and anxiety regarding their children's well-being and their own impending death. The emotional and spiritual care provided at the care center, along with the peer support of fellow patients, offered a means of coping with the effects of HIV/AIDS and supporting hope. The patients reported that their hopes centered around attending to their health, hoping in the future of their children, and helping society through participation in HIV/AIDS education.

The results of this study point to the need for expanded HIV/AIDS educational programs with HIV/AIDS patients as conveyors of information in order to promote their acceptance within communities. Furthermore, it is suggested that local religious personnel provide role models of acceptance and care to support hope in people with HIV/AIDS.