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A concept analysis on lost to follow up in healthcare and research

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Abstract: The concept of being lost to follow up is one that is predominantly used in healthcare and research. As obvious as the literal meaning of the concept might seem, its use, particularly as it concerns health, requires a detailed understanding of factors surrounding its occurrences, and ways to deter its subsequent detrimental consequences. Thus, the Avant and Walker's eight step to a concept analysis was used to identify the antecedents, attributes, empirical referents and consequences of this concept from the perspective of the individual. The attributes of the concept of lost to follow up includes: any new occurring incident such as a pregnancy, an acute or chronic illness or the administration of a research intervention requiring frequent evaluation and ongoing-treatment by a healthcare provider or researcher in a given particular setting such as a clinic, a hospital or a research site. The antecedents of being lost to follow-up include: a lack of interest or negligence, lack of perceived benefits, geographic barriers, stigma, and previous negative experience. Individuals who are lost to follow up in the healthcare system are at risk of increased disease morbidity and mortality. In research studies, participants who are lost to follow up are capable of introducing bias to the study's findings. Identifying patients or participants lost to follow up with healthcare or research respectively is the first step to a series of extra steps needed to return and engage them in care. Healthcare providers and researchers have a responsibility to understand factors contributing to such occurrences in order to intervene accordingly and ensure optimum health and credible study results are obtained as the case may be.

Biography

Ms. Ojukwu is a registered nurse and has completed a BSN at the age of 21 years from South Carolina State University. She is now studying to obtain her PhD from the University of Miami, USA. Ms. Ojukwu's research interest in women's health and infectious diseases was spurred from her clinical experience working with HIV-infected mothers and their babies at the University of Miami Hospitals Pediatric Immunology Clinic. Specifically, her research focus is on Disengagement/Being Lost to follow-up in HIV care among pregnant and postpartum women. She is currently engaged in writing for publication on 3 research studies, one of which includes the concept analysis which she will be presenting at this conference.

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