

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE APPOINTMENT
MISSING AMONG HIV PATIENTS ATTENDING
ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY CLINIC AT
HLAINGTHARYAR GENERAL HOSPITAL,
YANGON DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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M.B.,B.S, Dip.Med.Sc (Hospital Administration)

Master of Hospital Administration (MHA)

University of Public Health, Yangon

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**Thesis submitted to
the Post graduate Academic Board of Studies,
University of Public Health, Yangon
as the partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Master of Hospital Administration (MHA)**

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic impacted numerous human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) programs totally unprepared, prompting enormous interruption in HIV treatment. The effect of missed appointments in HIV care caused increased adverse outcomes, such as morbidity and mortality among the people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). This study aims to describe the factors for appointments missing among HIV patients attending antiretroviral therapy (ART) clinic and to explore the barrier of health care providers (HCPs) in giving HIV care and treatment during Covid-19 pandemic. A cross-sectional descriptive study with both quantitative and qualitative approaches was conducted at the ART clinic of Hlaingtharyar General Hospital, Yangon. In quantitative data collection, a total of 180 PLWHA who are receiving ART at outpatient department (OPD) of ART clinic were interviewed by using pre-tested structured questionnaires. For qualitative purpose, key informant interviews were carried out with 3 health care providers who have been working at least one year of service at ART clinic in this study. The study found that (12.2%) of the study population had missed appointments. The most common difficulties to attend ART clinic during the Covid-19 pandemic were financial difficulties (49.2%), health center closure (34.9%), transportation difficulties due to lockdown (23.8%) and difficulties on taking leave (20.6%). There were statistically significant association between missed appointments and the factors such as male, health center closure, transportation difficulties due to lockdown, political problems and personal problems. Key informants reported that the most common barriers were the increased workload, shortage of manpower and shortage of some infections prophylactic drugs during pandemic situation. Regarding supportive measures, key informants suggested emphasizing counseling, preventing communication gaps, and collaborating with international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The study recommended that efficient counseling, effective communication links, adequate availability and distribution of ARV drugs for 6 months refills. It also recommended that Stakeholders, Ministry of health (MOH), HCPs, INGOs and NGOs should work in partnership to reduce the impact of any pandemic or crisis problems.