

# Рецензія

## SOCIAL WORK AND COMBATING THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC OF HIV

## СОЦІАЛЬНА РОБОТА І ПРОТИДІЯ ГЛОБАЛЬНІЙ ЕПІДЕМІЇ ВІЛ

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**Review of book:** Henrickson, M., Chipanta, D., Lynch, V., Muñoz Sanchez, H., Nadkarni, V., Semigina, T., & Sewpaul, V. (Eds.). (2017). *Getting to zero: Global social work responds to HIV*. Geneva: UNAIDS and IASSW. Retrieved from: [http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media\\_asset/Global-social-work-responds-to-HIV\\_en.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/Global-social-work-responds-to-HIV_en.pdf)

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HIV-epidemic starting from 1980 th revealed many aspects of a medical problem, and first of all it demonstrated that beyond medical dimension HIV/AIDS has many others: political, financial, social, psychological, etc. There are few other fields in medicine where social work is so important and even crucial. Millions of HIV-positive people over the world need not only medical care; they are in even more need of effective HIV prevention. These tasks cannot be fulfilled without assistance of social workers. The reviewed book was written by social workers, for social workers and about social workers. It also provides valuable insights regarding research in the area of social work: about how to plan the studies, conduct them, and analyze the data.

The book prove that social workers dealing with HIV/AIDS epidemics are employing their extensive and growing role repertoire (Noble, Strauss & Littlechild, 2014) – they help people to access antiretroviral therapy and support retention of HIV-positive clients in treatment; they assist people in getting condoms, sterile needles, and opioid substitution therapy, as well as food, housing and employment. They protect the rights of vulnerable populations and help to prevent and treat gender inequalities and sexual-based violence – and these are just a few tasks that social workers fulfill every day.

Social workers play important and absolutely unique role in the life of vulnerable people (and all HIV-positive people still remain vulnerable in certain sense) and their close ones. There are great stories of success of individuals and communities who achieved fantastic progress in response to HIV-infection, but the majority of these stories are associated with achievements of the medicine (novel treatment and diagnostic methods, effective antiretroviral medications, etc.). At the same time, the work of a large pool of professionals who directly, face-to-face deal with HIV-positive persons is often left in the shadow.

This is not fair, and the reviewed book is bridging the gap. It is devoted to the methods, and - for me it is more important - to the people who everyday meet with human beings and in the same old fashion manner of personal communication make a burden of the disease easier for them and help them solve tons of related problems.

Though the book contains the chapters written by different authors it is very well assembled. All sections have logical consequence and clear order. Each chapter shows different aspects of important problems to the readers.

In the article of Tonya R. Thurman et al., the authors analyze the best practices in research and evaluation studies with focus of ethical considerations, collaboration with local stakeholders, and adaptation of evaluation design to the local conditions. The other section (Munyaradzi Muchacha and Abel Matsika) covers the prevention of mother-to child transmission (PMTCT): though PMTCT is a crucial component of bringing up HIV-free generation, stigma and discrimination still are the biggest barriers to treatment and prevention. Gender inequality, faith-based objections, and economic poverty are among the main problems. The author convincingly demonstrates that social workers possess capacity and technologies to deal with these problems.

Some articles focus on the Key Affected Populations (KAP). Findings of the research studies show novel effective practices, particularly in India, where high-tech methods of knowledge distribution were implemented to prevent HIV transmission among men having sex with men (MSM).

Due to the social workers, it made a serious contribution to the abolition of social and health-access inequalities, stigma and discrimination (Germany). In his well-designed paper, Heino Stöver shows that it is impossible to achieve zero discrimination without close collaboration with the drug using individuals – «Nothing about us without us».

Another interesting paper is devoted to communism legacy was written by Florin Lazăr. We already know how the leading paradigms regarding KAP, that are predominant in the society, strongly influence the epidemic. Author shows in detail that communist philosophy absolutely does not match the modern understanding of social work; he also provides the guidance to overcoming this barrier.

Thoughtful analysis of Ukrainian context was presented by Tetyana Semigina. Author studies the influence of NGOs and HIV-activism on stigma and discrimination in the post-communist society. This paper is building up the previous publications of the author (Spicer et al., 2011; Semigina, 2015). It serves as an evident that, from one hand, there is a significant success in changing of professional attitudes toward HIV-positive people and other KAPs; from another hand, still there are structural barriers and wrong beliefs, which do not allow achieving zero discrimination in the nearest future.

The final part of the book "National and regional social work policy and professional development" presents articles from different parts of the world. Multicultural vision of similar problems creates a very specific picture and helps readers understand how complicated the goal - Getting to Zero Discrimination - is. This goal cannot be achieved by a separate effort in one separate part of the world. We face a global challenge, and we can only find an answer by joint efforts.

The reviewed book is a significant contribution to solving one of the greatest problems that mankind faces today.

## References

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