Food Shortages Hinder HIV Treatment in Mozambique

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Continuing global food shortages are making it difficult for positive Mozambicans to adhere to their treatment regimens despite free and easy-to-access antiretroviral drugs, IRIN/PlusNews reports.

“It’s hard to know the specific reasons why people abandon treatment, but there are lots of patients with low weight and nutrition problems,” said Clarice Nheleti, a psychologist and supervisor of the psycho-social unit at Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF; Doctors Without Borders).

According to the article, only 9.7 percent of the country’s 88,000 adults and 6,000 HIV-positive children were receiving food aid by the end of 2007.

Because many HIV medications must be taken with food, positive Mozambicans suffer from constant nausea and weakness when forced to take the drugs on an empty stomach. In addition, poor nutrition leaves them vulnerable to opportunistic infections.

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