

Table 1 Views of managers, policy-makers, physicians and counsellors about the problems of providing services for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Macro-category	Category	Example quotes
<i>Views of managers and policy-makers</i>		
Difficulties for PLHIV in accessing service centres	Long traveling distances for PLHIV to receive health-care services	"Some of the PLHIV do not go to these centres due to the long distances."
	PLHIV cannot cover cost of commuting to the centres due to financial problems	"Some people do not have the fare for transport to these centres."
	Small number of service centres (counselling centres), especially in mega-cities	"There are a limited number of counselling centres."
Incomplete coverage of services for PLHIV in counselling centres (specialized services and care)	Lack of specialized services for PLHIV and care in counselling centres	"Counselling centres do not have the capacity to provide specialized services."
	PLHIV not receiving required health services provided by other centres, e.g. hospitals or health centres, due to patients' financial problems	"Other centres do not provide the required services due to patients' lack of financial ability."
Inappropriate coverage by insurance services	Inappropriate coverage of insurance services and lack of insurance for health needs	"Given that most of the infected people do not have health insurance, they face financial problems if they want to use health-care services."
Lack of awareness and training in the community	Insufficient awareness about HIV/AIDS in the community	"Still the community has little information in this regard. People suppose that the patients will certainly die."
	Insufficient awareness about HIV/AIDS among PLHIV	"Patients do not have enough information about the disease and its treatment."
Lack of awareness about HIV/AIDS among medical staff	Insufficient awareness about HIV/AIDS among medical staff	"Unfortunately, medical staff, especially in other centres, do not have enough knowledge about patients' treatment and care. They do not admit patients appropriately."
Substance abuse by PLHIV	Insufficient substance abuse treatment centres willing to provide services for PLHIV	"Substance abuse is itself a problem among many patients. There are still no effective substance abuse treatment services for these individuals."
Stigma of HIV	Patients' fear of stigma from the community and health personnel hinders their utilization of services and needs more elucidation to be understood	"Because of the stigma and the fear of being recognized as HIV patients in the community, PLHIV are not willing to refer to counselling centres."
<i>Views of physicians and counsellors</i>		
Difficulties for PLHIV in accessing service centres	Long traveling distances for PLHIV to receive health-care services	"There is a long travel distance [between home and the centres] for the patients." "Long travelling distances, poverty and substance abuse prevent patients getting to the centres."
	PLHIV cannot cover cost of commuting to the centres due to financial problems	"These patients do not have money even for food, let alone for commuting to the centres."
	Lack of timely referral of PLHIV to services	
Lack of awareness and training in the community	Lack of awareness about HIV/AIDS in the community	"There is insufficient training [about HIV/AIDS] in the community."
	Lack of awareness about HIV/AIDS among medical staff	"Hospital personnel still do not have suitable knowledge about HIV."
Incomplete coverage of services for PLHIV in these centres	Lack of/inappropriate insurance coverage for PLHIV	"Most of the patients do not have an insurance card/book or do not even have the financial ability to get insurance."