

ABSTRACT

South African health systems are struggling to cope with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Home based care has become an invaluable resource that relieves overburdened and under-resourced hospitals. Home based carers provide basic nursing care and support to patients and their families, in the patient's home.

Little is known about what motivates home based carers. Minimal research has been undertaken to investigate the expectations and experiences of these noble voluntary helpers. This study was conducted with a sample of home based carers at Community Outreach Centre, St Mary's, Mariannhill. Being field focused it used a qualitative research approach and participatory action research methodology. Focus group discussions were conducted with home based carers to explore their needs, motivations and expectations of Community Outreach Centre.

The study enlightens us about issues related to home based care that directly affect them. Despite the painful realities of their lives, they appeared positive about serving as volunteer home based carers.