

## **Impact of HIV on Communities in Northern Namibia**

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This paper examines the development of mortality and fertility during 1980-2004 in northern Namibia, the problems met by families affected by increased mortality and morbidity, and the support such families receive. The main sources of data consist of parish registers for eight Evangelical Lutheran congregations, interviews made in the study region, the Namibia Demographic and Health Surveys, 1991 and 2001 population censuses, and government documents.

In 2008, HIV prevalence among pregnant women in North-Central Namibia was 21%. Mortality began to increase in the early 1990s, stabilised for men in the 2000s, but continued to increase among women. Fertility declined from 5.0 in 1980-89 to 4.1 in 1990-99 and to 3.5 in 2000-04. During the 1990s, HIV infection explained 25-29% of the decline in total fertility.

The state support HIV affected people and families e.g. by antiretroviral treatment (ART) and different modes of financial support. Although ART has increased, there are still obstacles to treatment, including, e.g. indirect costs of treatment, as well as insufficient levels of human and infrastructure resources in health system. Therefore, e.g. Caprivi region has started to decentralize HIV-treatment services at the clinical level.

Financial support provided by the state is not reached by all of the affected families, which makes practical assistance provided by voluntary organisations, churches and international aid organisations essential. More emphasis should still be paid on accessibility of different forms of support provided by the state.