



CareMate+ as a couple-based intervention to improve dyadic coping and quality of life among HIV-serodiscordant couples: results from an initial intervention after programme development

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Background: In 2024, partners of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Indonesia had the highest positivity rate (25.9%) and were the second highest risk group for new HIV cases in Yogyakarta (19.5%). Social support from partners is essential for adapting to the virus and preventing transmission. Therefore, a couple based intervention was developed to foster dyadic coping and improve outcomes for HIV-serodiscordant couples in Indonesia, especially in Yogyakarta.

Method: A mixed-method study was conducted to develop and pilot-test the CareMate+ intervention in 5 districts of Yogyakarta, targeting HIV-serodiscordant couples. CareMate+ included three sessions of education/group counseling and using a couple's diary app over six weeks to improve intimacy and cooperation. The initial intervention, conducted from January-March 2026, involved 15 randomly selected HIV-serodiscordant couples who had smartphones and had lived together for more than six months. A pre-post-test design without a control group was used. Assessments were made at baseline and post-treatment on individual (HIV treatment adherence, HIV prevention consistency, stigma) and couple levels (dyadic coping, marital satisfaction, quality of life(QoL)). Data were analysed using appropriate inferential statistics.

Results: The CareMate+ significantly improved ART adherence ($p=0.038$) and reduced stigma ($p=0.046$) for PLHIV. For partners, it did not significantly affect HIV prevention consistency ($p=0.160$) or stigma ($p=0.705$). QoL ($p=0.020$) and common dyadic coping ($p=0.002$) improved, but marital satisfaction remained unchanged ($p=0.408$) among them.

Conclusion: The CareMate+ intervention may improve health and quality of life for PLHIV. Future studies with a larger sample size, a control group, and updated material focusing on partners are needed.

