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## A Blind Man's Secret of Adherence to ARV Drugs: A Case Study

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### Abstract:

This paper is based on the case study of a blind man, Shambhu, who is found adhere to ARV drugs. This case study was conducted by the author when she was working as ART counselor in ART (Anti retroviral therapy) Centre, Surat. More than 95% of adherence of a blind man created a quest in an author to know more about it in greater details so she conducted the case study of a Shambhu. This paper portraits personal, professional, marital, medical and socio-economic condition of Shambhu and in last it uncovers the secret of Shambhu's perfect adherence which is followed by remarks which can be helpful to other HIV positive people who can't be adhere to ARV drugs yet they are not having severe physical problem like Shambhu. Hope, this case study will be helpful to PLHA clients who are on ART and cannot adhere to drugs.

### 1. Preface

HIV denotes human immunodeficiency virus. It weakens a person's immune system by destroying important cells that fight infection and disease. No effective treatment exists for HIV. But with proper medication and supervision, HIV can be controlled. Anti retroviral drugs are referred to ARV drugs which are given to the PLHA clients at free of cost with a context of WHO guideline. The adherence to such drug is highly expected by ART service providers for non resistant of drugs. The case study of Shambhu which is presented in this paper is the best example of more than 95% of ARV drug adherence yet he is blind. If he can adhere to ARV drugs than why other HIV +ve people lets uncover the secret of Shambhu's perfect adherence.

#### 1.1. What Is Medication Adherence?

Medication adherence means sticking firmly to an HIV regimen—taking HIV medicines every day and exactly as prescribed.

#### 1.2. What Is Miss Date?

Miss date in context of ARV patients means that they have missed their follow up at ART centre on due date.

### 2. Case Study

#### 2.1. Personal History

Sambhu is a blind man aged 39 years old residing in Surat. He is HIV +Ve person. He didn't bear blind but side effects of ARV drugs made him blind. He is the only child in his family. He lost his father in accident when he was 16 years old.

#### 2.2. Professional History

Shambhu educated up to 7<sup>th</sup> STD. Primary educated Shambhu had to do labor work in textile industry of Surat to feed his own self and his mother. Monthly income of Shambhu was Rs. 3000 only. Presently, he can't earn a single penny as he has become blind because of ARV Drugs.

#### 2.3. Marital History

Shambhu got married with Geeta at the age of 20 years old. Both Husband and wife were living together but the tuning/rapport between them was lacking from the beginning. Shambhu's in-laws were also residing in Surat. Shambhu's wife was going anytime without informing anyone to meet her parents from the beginning which had hurt Shambhu for many times and he couldn't give that place in his heart to his wife.

Not only that, all domestic work was compulsorily done by his mother yet he was married. He hadn't got the love and affection from his wife. Presently, their marital status is separated and they are not living with each other. The separation from wife and need of sex had compelled Shambhu to have relation with a sex worker and he got infection of HIV from her. He doesn't have any Child and He is living with his mother at present.

#### 2.4. Medical History

Shambhu was suffering from fever for a month in November 2006. He went to a private practitioner for the treatment and he was tested for HIV infection on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 2006. The report was found +ve. He was infected with HIV. He accepted that he had Sexual relation with sex worker after his separation with his wife. The private doctor started ARV medicine but was not told about the medicine which was started. Precautions and side effect were also not informed to him. He was only informed that he is HIV +ve. He was even not told that he will have to take this ARV drugs for the lifetime.

The God was not in a favor of Shambhu. It's not that All HIV +ve patients have side effects of drugs or it's also not like that all have severe side effects but Shambhu was one of that man who faced adverse side effect of ARV drugs. He lost his insight in taking ARV drugs. In the beginning, he felt dimness of vision about which he informed to his private doctor, but slowly and gradually he lost his total vision. Shambhu complained about the scarcity of money for medicine to his private practitioner. He was advised to go the Ahmedabad ART (Anti- Retro Virus Therapy) centre to have that drugs at free of cost. He was advised so to go there as there was not a single ART centre in Surat at that time. He started his ART medicine from Ahmedabad and he was transferred to ART centre, Surat on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2007 as ART was started in Surat at that time. His ARV drug was started on the same day from Surat. The medical report card of Shambhu is as indicated below.

Sr. No	Period	Who Stage	Weight	Fun. Status	CD4
1	START OF ARV	4	46	A	125
2	AT 6 MONTHS	1	53	W	154
3	AT 12 MONTHS	1	52	W	182
4	AT 18 MONTH	1	50	W	240
5	AT 24 MONTHS	1	51	W	273
6	AT 30 MONTHS	1	52	W	293

Table 1

The above table indicates that Shambhu was started ART when he was in 4<sup>th</sup> stage as per the WHO guidelines. His weight has near to be same for last 30 months and his CD4 Counts have always been found increased.

He was started ZLN(zidovudine/lamivudine/nevirapine) drugs before 32 months and no need to change the drug was found as his CD4 counts were increasing at every 6 months and he was not facing any physical problem because of ARV drugs. He has never been infected by Tuberculosis virus. He is not addicted to Smoking and Alcohol. His Adherence is always found more than 95% or A/0. For four times only he missed to come on due date in 32 months.

#### 2.5. Socio-Economic Problems

Shambhu's family is facing economical problems at this time but he had never faced any social problems and discrimination because of his HIV +ve status.

#### 2.6. Secret of Shambhu's Perfect Adherence

A blind man has never forgotten the date to come at ART centre. A blind man is having adherence of more than 95% or A/0 for last 32 months. A blind man has never missed the exact time to take medicine but how can it be possible?

It is not only possible but it is proved. Shambhu is fond of listening F.M. radio. He listens it almost whole day. It's like his best friend or companion to him and his best friend reminds him to take ARV medicine. The news programme on Surat F.M. starts at 10 am reminds Shambhu to take medicine and the programme Chhaya Geet on the same F.M channel at 10 pm again reminds Shambhu to take his ARV drugs so the secret of his perfect adherence is F.M radio. He always asks doctor about the next date of follow-up and he daily asks his mother about the date of the day. The day before the due date, he makes her mother realized to visit ART Centre next day so this is the secret of not missing due date.

#### 2.7. Remarks

If a blind man can come at given date and doesn't miss time to take ARV drugs then why can't other HIV positive people can do so.

If the blind man can have adherence of more than 95% for 32 months continuously then why can't other HIV +ve people can.

He is the best example for those HIV +ve people who are not having such severe physical problems yet missing both the ARV drugs and the due date of follow up.

### 3. Let's Spread this Message to All HIV +ve clients that "If There is a Will, There is a Way".

#### 3.1. Acronyms and Abbreviations

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| 1. CD4 - T- lymphocyte CD4+               | 2. ART Antiretroviral therapy                 |
| 3. HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus       | 4. NACO National AIDS Control Organization    |
| 5. T.B Tuberculosis                       | 6. WHO (World Health Organization),           |
| 7. ARV Drugs (Anti-retro virus drugs)     | 8. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) |
| 9. ZLN (zidovudine/lamivudine/nevirapine) | 10. PLHA people living with HIV /AIDS         |

**4. References**

- i. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_India)
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