'Close to the bone'?: catalysts for integrating HIV and AIDS into the academic curriculum

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Description:
Integrating HIV and AIDS into the academic curriculum remains a challenge which, for various reasons, is not fully taken up by academics at universities. Although much is being done in the health arena, and education is often put forward as the 'antidote' for the epidemic, only a few academics have introduced HIV and AIDS into their curricula. In this article, the authors explore why some academics have integrated HIV and AIDS into their curricula; what the catalyst was for doing so; and how these academics see this integration. This qualitative study within an interpretivist framework consisted of a collective case study design, using individual interviews as well as drawings to elicit responses from the purposively selected academics. Themes that emerged were: 'It's here, it's not somewhere out there'; 'People matter'; 'Buying into the idea'; and 'It's a directive'. The findings led to conclude, using a theory of social proximity as a lens, that the vigour of integrating HIV and AIDS is linked to how 'close to the bone' the pandemic is experienced, not only personally but also at community level. This clearly has implications for working with academics to integrate HIV and AIDS into their curricula.

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