INTRODUCTION

Support for young people living with HIV (YPLHIV) aged16-24 is critical but limited in Zambia (Mupambireyi et al., 2014; Skovdal and Ogutu, 2013)

YPLHIV are often not spoken about openly within communities

Limited disclosure is common in this group (Mbura et al., 2014)

METHODS

Qualitative cohort of 8 purposively sampled YPLHIV (4 young women, 4 young men) in 4 geographically spread Zambian urban communities

Data collected in four rounds: 1,2,3,4

Each participant was involved in three research activities (carried out at three-month intervals)

1. Participant observations (Round 1,2,4)
2. Individual in-depth interviews (Round1,2,4)
3. Participatory workshop (Round 3)

Use of visual tools: collages (Fig. 1) and disclosure network diagrams (Fig. 2).

Analysis: inductive and thematic analysis using workshop notes, ID transcripts, and visual data

KEY FINDINGS

Limited disclosure

- Limited disclosure network (Fig 2.)
- YPLHIV adjusted their lives to keep their HIV status a secret by for-going opportunities (e.g. going on holiday)
- YPLHIV often felt fatigued by keeping their status secret

Disclosure discouraged by parents’ guardians

- Parents often proscribed why and to whom YPLHIV disclosed their HIV status
- But guardians often felt that YPLHIV in their care could be well understood by someone ‘in their shoes’

Disclosure provides opportunities for support

- Disclosing to others has enabled friends and family to offer support
- Disclosure sometimes linked to receiving support from other YPLHIV

CONCLUSION

Limited disclosure prevents YPLHIV meeting and talking with other YPLHIV, leading to isolation

Limited disclosure sometimes desired by YPLHIV, sometimes encouraged by parents/guardians

Interventions targeting YPLHIV should address relationships in the home and the benefits, challenges and strategies for disclosure YPLHIV to allow them to share experiences, concerns and feel less alone

Support groups for YPLHIV can enable sharing experiences with others ‘in their shoes’ and reduce isolation

Virtual platforms and more involvement of this group as volunteers at the clinic were other suggestions that might help them find each other

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Desire to share experiences with others ‘in their shoes’

- YPLHIV often wanted to share experiences about managing HIV
- One participant had attended a support group: supportive to meet with others and for adherence
- Some YPLHIV often felt that there were other YP in their shoes who need to be accessed

"We ourselves in the current situation should be trained to encourage them, in most cases those who are HIV positive are just in their parents’ home thinking that they are helpless they can’t do anything in order to help themselves" (YW1WH, 17).

"They said I should have a balanced diet... sometimes I have toodles, that’s why I don’t take... you can’t tell who else is like me... how do they manage?" (YW1WH, 21).

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