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EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF TRANSITING HIV-INFECTED ADOLESCENTS TO AN ADULT HEALTH CARE IN THE SOUTHEAST BRAZIL: A NEW CHALLENGE

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Introduction: Adolescents who was born with HIV, usually followed by paediatricians, present new challenges to health care teams during transition to adult medical care.

Objective: To discuss the emotional meanings of transitioning this group to adult health care.

Method: Clinical-qualitative approach with preliminary interviews conducted with eight HIV-infected adolescents followed at Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil. The data were processed through Qualitative Content Analysis and discussed based on theoretical psychodynamic frameworks.

Results: The emergent themes were feelings of loss, risk of rupture of solid ties and unpreparedness to changes perceived as threatening. The transition to adult health care points to the need for developing patient self-care: "... I have to take more responsibility, I´m not ready, I´m still a teenager." They also mentioned concerns in moving away from their paediatricians, "here is like a family. I feel like they care about me ... they are not just doctors... kind of teacher... mother, you know ", "If I have to leave, I'll cry... "Is there a place where the paediatricians could follow us until 30 years?" On the other hand, there were testimonies showing compliance or interest in changing, " it's normal, I´m older, I have to stay right there", "I´m the oldest ... it's weird to be among children."

Conclusions: Although adolescents understand the need of transition of health care, they manifest several difficulties. Individualized transitioning plans and increasing interaction between paediatric and adult HIV care providers could better address the needs of this unique population.