“Life with HIV/AIDS in times of the highly active antiretroviral therapy”

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Introduction
Since the introduction of the highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) in 1996, HIV has turned from an acute and life threatening to a chronic disease. If properly applied HAART can postpone the outbreak of AIDS over a long period of time or even prevent it, in order to avoid therapy resistance however, adherence of at least 95% is required. To accomplish this it’s essential for patients to develop elaborate disease-, therapy- and daily-life management strategies (Chesney, 2003).

Aim of the study & (Expected) Practical relevance
The aim of this study is to gather profound insights from a patient’s perspective concerning the life with a highly active antiretroviral therapy, in order to react better to the patient’s present physical, psychological and social needs. These findings shall also function as groundwork for the development of new theoretical concepts.

Methods
The study follows a qualitative research design based on the grounded theory approach by Strauss & Corbin (1996). Guided open interviews are conducted with people who are living with HIV/AIDS and have experiences with HAART.

Results
Even if the process of data collection and analyze is still going on, preliminary identified phenomena show that not the therapy itself, but the society’s perception towards HIV/AIDS, define the daily routine of people living with HIV/AIDS. Further phenomena depict body image changes as a side effect of the HAART, confidence in medical doctors and downplaying the importance of one’s adherence.

Discussion
Since the preliminary phenomena are in part quite unexpected, the further theoretical sampling process (in the manner of Grounded Theory) must be clarified in order to cover the whole experience of HIV/AIDS patients with HAART.

References