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Mental Health of PLWHA

- **Mental Health Statistics in St. Marc, Haiti:**

Approximately 15% of PLWHA have problems with mental health in St. Marc. Mental health issues are exacerbated by poverty including poor housing, lack of jobs, or food. There is a significant amount of stigma associated with mental health.

- **Mental Health Statistics FEBS' Clients:**

FEBS works as psychosocial support for PLWHA clients mental well-being. They work on psychosocial counseling for clients. Services include help with psychiatric problems including depression and social issues such as stigma within communities or families. Depression is the most prevalent issue experienced by PLWHA followed by somatoform disorders, low self-esteem, grief, and delirium of persecution. About 6-10% deal with depression which FEBS' attributes to a lack of housing, unemployment, and stigmatization. Currently, there are 7 clients with moderate depression, 1 with light depression, and 4 with severe depression totaling 12 clients dealing with depression issues. On average, at any given time about 8% of FEBS clients will be receiving psychiatric counseling. These services include:

- Post-test counseling for an average of 3 clients a month who have tested positive for HIV.
- Control counseling for about 35-45 clients is used to evaluate PLWHA ability to function in society by assessing their psychological state.
- Support counseling is administered to about 17 clients a month to deal with depression and other psychological issues, as FEBS' considers them.
- Pre-ARV counseling is available for those about to be placed under ARV treatment, providing about 4-7 persons a month.
- Adherence counseling serves 8-12 individuals per month for those who are facing negative side effects from ARV treatment. This may include developing characteristics of the opposite sex(i.e. some men develop breasts, some women start to grow facial hair, etc.)
- Diagnostic training and psychotherapy is received by 1-3 people per month.



- **Haitian Perspective:** According to Loune Viaud - Director of Strategic Planning and Operations, Partners in Health, Haiti:

The well being of PLWHA varies from person to person. Some, through psychosocial support, have accepted their status and have a more positive outlook on life. These PLWHA are more lively and can exert themselves physically more so than those who perceive a positive status as a death sentence. In this regard, having access to social support is beneficial for the mental well being of PLWHA. While access to health care is extremely important in case of emergencies, it is even more important for PLWHA to have access to psychosocial support. Often times, they want and need someone to talk to, not necessarily for advice, but just to have someone listen. Therefore, it is critical that access to social workers is close at hand.