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# My fear is to fall in love again<sup>TM</sup> How HIV-positive African women survive in London

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### Abstract

Many studies are now documenting the circumstances of people living with HIV/AIDS in different parts of the world. We know an increasing amount about the experiences of women who make up the majority of those infected in countries in sub-Saharan Africa. However, very few researchers have examined the lives of female migrants from the region living with HIV. This article begins to fill that gap by exploring the situation of 62 women from different parts of Africa receiving treatment from the National Health Service in London. It is based on a qualitative study carried out between 2001 and 2002 using semi-structured interviews. The analysis explores the ways in which the women's lives are shaped in complex ways by their sex and gender, by their status as migrants and by their seropositivity. It examines the nature of their survival strategies, focusing mainly on the management of information, the use of health services and the importance of spirituality in their lives. The article concludes by highlighting the paradox whereby these

women have access to treatment that would be unavailable in their own countries but their survival depends on them remaining in a country which few regard as "home".



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## Keywords

HIV/AIDS; African women; UK

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