Syndemic Pandemic: COVID-19, HIV, and Antiretroviral Therapy Adherence Among Black/African Americans in Atlanta

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**RESEARCH QUESTION:** How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced adherence to antiretroviral therapy among Black/African Americans with HIV in Atlanta?

**BACKGROUND**
The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences pose a threat to optimal antiretroviral therapy (ART) adherence in underserved communities with HIV. The present mixed methods research study explored the impact of the pandemic on ART adherence among Black/African Americans (Black/AA) with HIV (PWH) in Atlanta.

**METHODS**

**Design:** Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods; Community-Engaged

**Sample:** N=200 Black/AA PWH were recruited across 3 HIV clinics to complete a cross-sectional survey
- N=37 took part in either a focus group discussion or individual in-depth interview

**Analysis**
- Quantitative (SPSS, SAS)
- Qualitative (MAXQDA 2020)
- Data triangulation

**RESULTS**
- 80% reported optimal (>95%) ART adherence across both Spring and Winter 2020
- Demographic Characteristics
  - Age: 49.7 years
  - Male: 50.5%
  - Viral load suppression: 88%
  - > High school degree: 51.5%
  - Employed: 38.5%
  - Rent or own home: 91.3%

**IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on structural factors pose a threat to optimal ART adherence among Black/AA PWH in Atlanta
- Prioritize future research that seeks to understand differential access to social and structural determinants of health in the Black/AA community
- Policy makers should advocate for social, structural, and economic justice for historically underserved communities