



Dr Maite Irurzun López received her Phd in June 2010 from the University of Cape Town.

Thesis Title: Absorptive capacity to finance HIV/AIDS treatment in South Africa: Where are the bottlenecks?

Maite Irurzun López has a BSc and MA in Applied Economic Analysis from the University of Alicante (Spain), and an MPhil in Development Studies from the University of Sussex (UK). In her PhD thesis, Maite Irurzun López investigates absorptive capacity in South Africa's public health sector in relation to scaling up financing for HIV/AIDS treatment.

At the conceptual level, the study defines and constructs an analytical framework of absorptive capacity and related bottlenecks, identifying five major areas where bottlenecks may arise: financial, human, infrastructural, institutional (within the health system) and structural (outside the health system).

At the empirical level, the study assesses and compares absorptive capacity and major bottlenecks encountered nationally and in the Free State and Western Cape provinces in respect of the public sector HIV/AIDS treatment programme.

The findings show that South Africa's absorptive capacity was constrained by poor practices and a shortage of human resources, insufficient financial capacity and demanding requirements of conditional funding, inadequate infrastructure, and inadequate national leadership. To overcome these obstacles, the mere injection of even more funding would be an insufficient response. Consequently, the study indicates which other reforms are required, including: further integrating antiretroviral (ART) services within the public health structures; further decentralising ART towards primary health care; task shifting; balancing the conditional grant and the equitable share; and enhancing coordination between the National and Provincial Departments of Health and with Treasury.

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