

Stigma & Discrimination

- Myth? – as more people get HIV tested, stigma and discrimination will be reduced.
- Myth? - people are seeking ARV treatment so stigma and discrimination is being reduced.
- Lots of opinions and anecdotal comments, very little data. No published stigma reduction trials with any acceptable level of rigor.

“Nearly all of the research on this subject has lacked rigorous scientific analysis, relying instead on testimonials....Part of the challenge of AIDS stigma is to recognize its impact on patients and caregivers alike and to develop strategies for mitigating its effects.”

Holzemer, W.L. & Uys, L. (2004). Managing AIDS Stigma. Journal of Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS. 1(3): 165-174

M & E activities should consider examining the impact of stigma on ... ?

- Participation in HIV testing
- Use of services (home vs. hospital births?)
- Poor treatment by health care providers
- Adherence to medications
- Health status (viral control)
- Quality of life
 - § Loss of social support
 - § Isolation
 - § Violence
 - § Limiting social interactions due to fear
- Impact on health workers

M & E activities should consider the impact of stigma on health care providers.

- Nurses and health care workers are stigmatized for being a nurse, where all patients are HIV positive. Neighbors request that their children stop playing with the children of the nurse
- Nurses and health care workers stigmatize patients, providing poorer quality of care as reported by patients.

The Measurement of Stigma

- New measures of stigma are becoming available
- These instruments can provide valid and reliable measures of stigma.
- Stigma measures reflect individuals' perceptions and should not be devalued as subjective; measures of stigma represent important perspectives on the illness experience and enhance our understanding of the challenges of living with and being affected by HIV infection.

Stigma Instrument for persons living with HIV infection

- 33 items
- Likert scale: In the past 3 months, how often did the following events happen because of your HIV status? 1) Never, 2) Once or twice, 3) Several times, 4) Most of the time.
- 6 factors:
 - § Verbal Abuse
 - § Negative Self-Perception
 - § Health Care Neglect
 - § Social Isolation
 - § Fear of Contagion
 - § Workplace Stigma

Holzemer, W.L., Uys, L.R., Chirwa, M.L., Greeff, M., et al. (in press). Validation of the HIV/AIDS Stigma Instrument- PLWA (HASI-P). AIDS Care.

