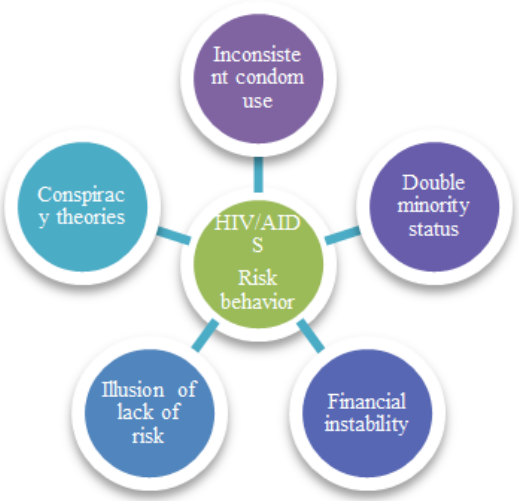
Stigma, discrimination, and the social/cultural determinants surrounding HIV/AIDS individuals

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Abstract

The experiences of individuals living with HIV/AIDS are strongly affected by and shaped through misconceptions, stigma, discrimination, and the cultural/ social determinants surrounding this pandemic. The limited knowledge and silence surrounding HIV/AIDS often cause hesitation when it comes to disclosing one's status, seeking treatment, and maintaining care, fueling further feelings of negativity and self-stigma. Likewise, the social meaning and cultural context surrounding HIV/AIDS can lead to risky behavior and increase one's exposure to HIV. This study seeks to better understand ways in which individuals with HIV are stigmatized and discriminated against. It includes a literature review regarding HIV-related stigma and original research drawing on ethnographic research, client interactions, and interviews with 40 participants. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who previously received an HIV test and were willing to share their perceptions, experiences, feelings, and thoughts about HIV/AIDS. This data illustrates that stigma manifests itself in highly variable ways and that everyone's experiences differ depending on their support systems.

Image



Five areas that contribute to one's HIV risk behavior.

Recent Publications:

1. Dillon P J & Basu A (2014) HIV/AIDS and minority men who have sex with men: A meta-ethnographic synthesis of qualitative research. Health communication. 29: 182-192.

2. Bogart L M & Thorburn S (2005) Are HIV/AIDS conspiracy beliefs a barrier to HIV prevention among African Americans? JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes. 38 (2): 213-218.

3. Goffman E (1963) Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

4. Parker R & Aggleton P (2003) HIV and AIDS-related stigma and discrimination: A conceptual framework and implications for action. Social Science & Medicine. 57 (1): 13+.

5. Williams J K, Wyatt G E, Resell J, Peterson J & Asuan-O'Brien A (2004) Psychosocial issues among gay-and non-gay-identifying HIV-seropositive African American and Latino MSM. Cultural diversity and ethnic minority psychology. 10 (3): 268.



Biography

Michelle Nguyen is an undergraduate student at Trinity University interested in studying the cultural and structural determinants that increases one's risk behavior in contracting HIV. She believes that by studying these areas, the stigmatizing effects that arise from one's social settings can be addressed and targeted in a manner that appeal to the individual, which includes the cultural environment in which they reside. By altering one's perception of HIV as a taboo subject that should be hidden, individuals may be more likely to disclose their status (if they are positive) and regularly get tested for HIV (if they are negative/uncertain), lowering theirs and their partner's vulnerability to HIV. Because prevention strategies are fashioned and implemented within certain political landscapes, successful prevention programs should aim to change the social context in which the affected individual experiences inequality and discrimination.

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Notes/Comments: