

Effect of Stigma on Prevention of Infection by HIV/AIDS

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**International Medical Education
Infection Prevention and Control Conference
Ramallah, Palestine
29-5-2014**

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HIV/AIDS?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

HIV positive person can feel and look healthy for a long time after first becoming infected.

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) The virus kills more and more cells in the immune system and the body loses the ability to fight off common infections.

Transmission of HIV?

- **Sex:** Unprotected sexual contact - with an infected partner.
- **Blood:** By sharing unsterilized needles or syringes with an HIV positive person, or through blood transfusions with infected blood.
- **Mother-to-Child:** During pregnancy or birth and through breastfeeding from an HIV positive mother to her baby.

HIV/AIDS in Palestine?

- **Cases Under treatment:** Less than 30 cases (West Bank and Gaza)
- **Treatment:** Drugs are available at MoH Health Facility (West Bank and Gaza)
- **Laboratory tests:** VCT (Voluntary and Counselling Test) and Viral Load tests-MoH.
- **Most at Risk Groups?**

What is Stigma?

Shame or disgrace attached to something regarded as socially unacceptable (Illness).

Stigmatization reflects attitude

Discrimination is an act or behaviour

Stigma and HIV?

- **Lack of Knowledge:** information about HIV transmission.
- **Values:** HIV association with individual behaviors that are either illegal or socially sensitive (e.g., sex, drug use).

HIV and Stigma?

- HIV-related stigma is the single greatest reason to prevent spread of the disease at all levels.

Stigma and HIV Infection

Fear of stigma and less likely to seek HIV testing.

HIV-positive person may be afraid to seek necessary care and treatment.

Discourage those who are HIV-infected from discussing their HIV status with their sex partners.

Stigma and HIV Prevention

Reduced condom use

Lack of dialogue among HIV-negative and HIV-positive people

Prevents access to counselling

Discourage attending awareness sessions for
Most at Risk People

Minimizing Stigma to HIV?

- Human rights legislation
- National efforts to scale up ARV treatment
- Funding for training and awareness
- Awareness at schools, social, religious and community organizations
- Training for healthcare providers

Summary

HIV/AIDS-related stigmatisation and the resulting discrimination can discourage access to key HIV services and cause a significant challenge to prevention of HIV infection.

Summary

There is strong stigma to HIV/AIDS in Palestine.

Regulations, Training, and awareness campaigns using media is needed to minimize stigmatization to HIV/AIDS