

Level of Prejudice Among Health Care Providers In India

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Objectives

- Develop and test a scale to measure prejudice of health care providers against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA).
- Assess level of prejudice of health care providers against PLHA and their determinants.

Methodology

■ Study Site

- Vadodara district, Gujarat, India

■ Sample

- 50 doctors (gynecologists; general surgeon; physicians, skin and VD specialists.)
- 83 paramedics (58 nurse/ward boys and 25 lab. technicians)

■ Selection Procedure

- Doctors were selected from the Indian Medical Association directory, Vadodara Chapter
- Nurses and ward boys from the same clinics and hospitals of the doctors
- Lab technicians were selected from a list of diagnostic laboratories in Vadodara

Prejudice scale

- List of 46 statements related to PLHA developed.
- Statements reviewed by 15 professionals for appropriateness to measure prejudice against PLHA
- Responses measured by five point scale varying from strongly agree to strongly disagree.
- After testing 8 items dropped; final scale contained 38 items

Cont...

- The scale measured prejudice on three aspects:
 - **treatment/ service** e.g. – “I am comfortable in treating PLHAs” ; “My reputation will be at stake if I treat HIV/AIDS patients”
 - **family** e.g. – “PLHAs should be allowed to lead a normal life”; “Allowing HIV+ live in family could be dangerous for other family members”
 - **social interaction** e.g. – “I feel comfortable sitting and dinning with PLHAs”; “I feel aversion when I come across PLHAs, because I feel they have low morale values”

Reliability and validity of scale

- Scale reliable at 0.88 on Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The intrinsic validity was 0.94.

All Providers had some degree of prejudice against PLHAs

Table : Levels of prejudice among health care providers (Horizontal Percentage)

<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Prejudices</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Low</i>	
All	24.8	48.1	27.1	133
Doctors	14.0	56.0	30.0	50
Paramedics*	31.3	43.4	25.3	83

* Paramedics include nurses, ward boys, health worker, and lab. Technicians.

Prejudices – Major factors

Many prejudices against patients of Positive HIV status were found

92% of doctors & 72% of paramedics reported that they would refuse to treat HIV+ patients

“I never deal with HIV/AIDS patients, when they come for treatment I just refer them to other hospital”

Cont....

Concern for 'reputation' was also a major factor for refusing services.

More doctors (92 percent) than paramedics (59 percent) agreed that their reputation would be at stake if they treated HIV/AIDS patients.

*"my hospital's reputation will be at stake the moment people will come to know that HIV positive (people) are treated here." – **Doctor***

*"if people come to know that I have treated HIV positive people then nobody will approach us."-**Paramedic***

Correct knowledge decreases level of prejudice

Table : Health care providers level of prejudice by level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS

<i>Level of knowledge</i>	<i>Prejudices*</i>		
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>
High (N=14)	43%	43%	14%
Moderate (N=79)	26%	57%	16%
Low (N=40)	22%	33%	45%
Total Providers	33 (25%)	64 (48%)	36 (27%)

* χ^2 $p < .01$

Training in HIV/AIDS reduces level of prejudice

Table : Level of prejudice by training

<i>Training</i>			
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>High</i>
Received training N=39	44%	51%	5%
Not received N=94	20%	47%	33%
Total	33	64	36
* $\chi^2 = p < .001$			

Factors contributing to prejudice– Logit regression analysis

Particulars	Beta	Df	Sig.	Odd Ratio
Intercept (Coeff)	1.792	1	0.07	6.00
Female provider	0.982	1	0.041	2.67*
Providers received training	-1.195	1	0.009	0.30**
Working with private institution	0.497	1	0.328	1.64
Providers with 4+ years of experience	0.080	1	0.901	1.08
Av/good knowledge about HIV/AIDS	-1.721	1	0.005	0.17**
<p>* Significant at 0.05 level ** Significant at 0.01 level</p>				

Conclusion

- Study demonstrated that majority of health care providers prejudiced against PLHA.
- Doctors exhibit less prejudice than paramedics.
- Among paramedics, lab. technicians had highest prejudices. This is because of their perceived vulnerability to infection due to high exposure
- Providers who had received training or had correct knowledge of the disease had fewer prejudices

Recommendation

- To reduce prejudice against PLHA and improve care and support
 - Improve knowledge of providers
 - Organize short training courses related to disease management and counseling of HIV/AIDS patients.
 - Enforce infection prevention precautions in all facilities.