

HIV/AIDS Related Stigma among the General Population: A Cross-sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: HIV/AIDS is still an important public health issue worldwide. People living with HIV often face stigma and discrimination. Although awareness regarding HIV/AIDS has improved over the years, incorrect beliefs about transmission and casual contact are still present in society. These misconceptions may affect social behaviour and healthcare practices.

Aim: The present study was carried out to assess awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and stigma related to HIV/AIDS among the general population.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional survey-based study was carried out among individuals from different social and educational backgrounds. Data were collected through a questionnaire prepared through Google Forms. The questionnaire included questions related to awareness, transmission, prevention, attitudes, and stigma. Participation was voluntary, and responses were analysed using descriptive methods.

Results: The survey findings indicated that awareness regarding HIV/AIDS was generally present among participants. However, misconceptions regarding casual contact and social interaction were still observed among several individuals. Fear of social judgment and discriminatory attitudes toward people living with HIV were also noted. These perceptions may influence openness regarding HIV testing, treatment, and social support. Many respondents felt that awareness and educational activities could help reduce stigma and improve public understanding.

Conclusion: The study shows that HIV-related stigma is still present despite increased awareness about HIV/AIDS. Misconceptions, fear, and negative social attitudes remain important barriers to acceptance and open discussion. Providing accurate information and improving awareness and educational activities may help reduce stigma and promote a more accepting environment for HIV-positive individuals.

Keywords: Awareness, Discrimination, Public attitude, Social perception.

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