

Implementation and results of the HIV stigma index in Timor-Leste

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Disclosures:
No disclosures of interest to report.



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HIV IN TIMOR

There have been 725 diagnosed HIV cases in Timor-Leste, since 2003

- 91 people have died
- 287 are on treatment

- 0.6% of population are HIV+, identifying Timor-Leste as a low prevalence country

- 12% of youth in Timor-Leste have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS, age 15-24 (DHS Key Indicator Report, 2016)

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Purpose of the Study

- To build a foundation of information regarding stigma and discrimination

- Identify key barriers to HIV testing, prevention, treatment, care and support

- To formulate recommendations on the necessary steps

- To provide an evidence base for improving services, policies and programmes

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Process and Methodology

- Formed steering committee
- Methodology agreed upon (quantitative and qualitative research)
 - Respondent-driven sampling
 - PLHIV age >18 Years old
 - Adapted global GNP, UNAIDS, PPF questionnaire
- National ethics approval granted
- Training held with 10 enumerators (PLHIV)
- Data analysis used GNP global data portal and excel spreadsheet.
- Data storage at Estrela+ office

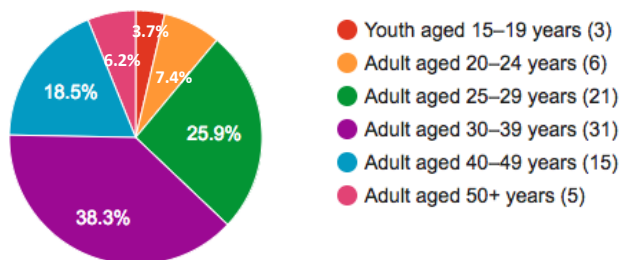
Research driven by the Greater involvement of People Living with HIV principles (GIPA)



Steering group



Age of Participants: (All participants were 18+)



- 81 participants
- 48% identified as female, 47% male, 5% transgender
- More than half (57%) had known about their HIV status for 1-4 years
- 65% of respondents had completed secondary school
 - 37% were in full-time work.
- 9.9% identified as physically disabled

Significant challenges reported by respondents included:

- 40% being tested without informed consent
- 90% females had experienced verbal and physical abuse,
- 60% reported low self-esteem related to their HIV-status,
- 40% had experienced unwanted disclosure of their HIV status,
 - 20% reported instances of coerced sterilization.
- difficulty accessing regular medication and health services,

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"Without my consent the health workers told my family of my HIV+ status before I could tell them and so I experienced stigma and discrimination from my family. Some members of my family do not want to be near me and they separate my things, clothes and plate and cups. (male, 30 yo)

"I divorced with my husband because [my] husband's family say that I have a bad disease so when my family hear that I am infected with HIV and divorced with my husband, my brother wants to kill me and say I am not worthy to live and shames me (female 19 yo)

ACTION PLAN/ steps are being taken to take the research into practice:

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- Sharing information and results widely
- Estrela+ continuing to provide training on stigma and discrimination across the country
- In partnership with ASHM, MSTL upskilling MSTL and Government providers
- Continuing to build a community of action and best practice



- **Actively looking for support to invest and improve referral networks for testing, treatment and psycho-social support in Timor-Leste**
- **Actively looking for support to invest in improved testing and treatment across the country**

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CONCLUSIONS:

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Using the HIV stigma index as a research tool demonstrated that people living with HIV in Timor-Leste face significant challenges around social inclusion and access to quality, comprehensive information and services.



We have a lot of work to do.

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- United Nations Population Fund
- Tanya Wells
- GNP+: Global Network for People Living with HIV
- World Health Organization
- UN women and UNHCR
- Provedoria dos Direitos Humanos
- National University of Timor-Leste
- CODIVA
- Sharis Haburas Comunidade
- Esperanca

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Obrigada!

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