

THE IMPACT OF STIGMA, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SELF-EFFICACY ON DEPRESSIVE, ANXIETY AND STRESS SYMPTOMS AMONG PEOPLE WITH HIV IN AUSTRALIA.

Authors:

McDonald K, Millard T, Klassen K, Battersby M, Osborne R, Fairley C, Elliott, JH.

Background:

Stigma has profound effects on the mental health of people with HIV (PWHIV) and it is important that factors that protect against comorbid chronic disease and mental health are identified and understood. The aim of this research was to examine whether social support or self-efficacy moderated the relationship of stigma in depression, anxiety and stress among PWHIV in Australia.

Methods:

The HealthMap Study dataset was used for this analysis. The sample comprised 621 PWHIV, aged 30 years or older living in Australia. Participants completed an online questionnaire that included the DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety, Stress Short Form), the heiQ (Health Education Impact Questionnaire) Social Support and Integration and Constructive Attitudes subscales), and the Herek Stigma Scale (Avoidance of Social Situations subscale), as well as demographic variables. A moderation analysis was used to whether perceived social support and self-efficacy would moderate the relationship between stigma and DASS scores. Additionally, hierarchical regression analyses explored whether social support would predict depression, anxiety and stress scores over and above being in a relationship or living with others.

Results:

The analysis revealed that while stigma, social support and self-efficacy were independent predictors of depression, anxiety and stress scores, the relationships between stigma and depression, anxiety and stress scores were not moderated by higher levels of social support. Self-efficacy moderated the effect of stigma on depression scores, but not for anxiety or stress. Being in a relationship contributed to the effect of social support for depression and anxiety but not for stress. Living with others was not a significant predictor of depression, anxiety and stress scores.

Conclusion:

Optimal treatment for depression and anxiety among PWHIV needs to address both stigma and social support. A more nuanced understanding of the role of stigma in the psychological health of PWHIV will facilitate the development of tailored interventions and clinical treatment.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Nothing to disclose.