

The Impact of HIV/AIDS-Related Stigma, HIV Transmission Knowledge, and Gender on Familial Support for People Living with HIV/AIDS: Implications for the “Test and Treat” Intervention in Fiji

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Abstract

Fiji aims to address the growing threat of HIV infections through the “test and treat” strategy which presupposes that Fijians will readily take part in testing and treatment of HIV. However, recent data indicates that uptake of testing and treatment continues to be very low within the Fijian population. This study looked at three key variables which are known to impede uptake of testing and adherence to treatment regimens; HIV knowledge, three types of HIV/AIDS-related stigma (fear-driven [FS], value-driven [VS], and anticipated secondary stigma [SS]), and familial support with 300 postsecondary students from Fiji. While knowledge of modes of transmission of HIV (KHIV) was high, participants had poor knowledge of the impact of HIV treatment on the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Furthermore, high KHIV was associated with low levels of FS and VS and high levels of familial support. Finally, the results indicate that in comparison to other types of HIV/AIDS-related stigma considered in this study, FS was the strongest and the only statistically significant predictor of familial support beyond what could be accounted for by KHIV and gender differences. These findings are discussed in relation to the implications for the test and treat intervention in Fiji.

Keywords: family support; gender differences; HIV knowledge; HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination; test and treat strategy

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