Poster presentations

**P4.050**  "YOU CAN IGNORE US BUT WE WON’T GO AWAY": A QUALITATIVE STUDY TO EXPLORE SEXUAL EXPERIENCES AND VULNERABILITY TO HIV INFECTION AMONG LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX WOMEN IN BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE


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**Background** The vulnerability of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LBTI) women to HIV infection is a complicated public health issue that remains poorly documented. The Zimbabwe National AIDS Strategic Plan 2011–2015 does not acknowledge LBTI women as a vulnerable population for HIV infection. This study sought to explore sexual experiences and HIV risk behaviour among LBTI women and to determine challenges and experiences of accessing HIV services.

**Methods** Three focus group discussions were conducted with LBTI women aged 18 years and above, n = 29. Purposive sampling was used to recruit study participants through announcements at relevant meetings and safe spaces in Bulawayo. Focus group discussions were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Using ATLAS ti software, a set of a priori concept-driven codes were applied to the transcripts. The analysis concentrated on HIV risk perception, sexual behaviour and access to health services, experiences of violence, stigma and discrimination.

**Results** Participant’s perception of HIV risk was very low despite their engagement in sexual activities that involve sharing of body fluids. Narratives revealed that the majority of LBTI women never practised safe-sex, lacked awareness of the existence of LBTI specific protective measures against HIV and rarely sought HIV counselling and testing services. LBTI women reported experiencing a repertoire of social exclusion and violence in their lives including forced sexual experiences. Barriers to HIV care and support, included HIV-related stigma, hetero-normative assumptions in HIV and STI related health services and unprofessional, discriminatory and incompetent treatment by health professionals.

**Conclusions** HIV risk among LBTI women is elevated by lack of access to HIV prevention services and barriers to HIV care and support. This study highlights a trajectory of structural exclusion of LBTI women which accentuates their vulnerability to HIV infection. HIV/AIDS policy in Zimbabwe should address HIV prevention, care and support for LBTI women.

**P4.051**  VULNERABILITY TO HIV AND PREVENTION NEEDS OF FEMALE POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS ENGAGED IN TRANSACTIONAL SEX IN KUMASI, GHANA - A QUALITATIVE STUDY


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**Aim** HIV thrives among mobile populations. Truck drivers particularly the long distance truck drivers are more vulnerable to HIV infection, because they travel a lot, remain cut off from the mainstream society, often engage in activities such as having unsafe sex with commercial sex workers and fellow crew members, in order to reduce their loneliness.

**Methods** In this study Interviews of 75 truck drivers at Badami Bagh Truck Stand, Lahore, Pakistan, were carried out on non-random basis, using convenient sampling technique through a structured questionnaire. The objective was to assess link between level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the attitude towards persons with AIDS.

**Results** 50% of the truck drivers were found unaware about the role of needles as a means of spreading HIV/AIDS. 30–40% thought that needles had nothing to do with the transmission of AIDS. Forty to fifty percent of respondents had the misconception that AIDS can be contracted by casual contact and by being in the same room with a person with AIDS. Two third of the truck drivers were of the view that monogamy and condom use is an effective method for AIDS prevention. An association between low knowledge of AIDS and high negative attitude towards persons with AIDS was found to exist, which was statistically significant.

**Conclusion** Long distance truck drivers in Pakistan have serious gaps in their knowledge about HIV/AIDS, especially its modes of transmission, signs/symptoms and prevention. Stigma towards persons with AIDS also exists due to Low level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS.