STD, HIV, AND PREGNANCY TESTING BEHAVIORS AMONG INTERNET AND MOBILE DATING APPLICATION USERS AND NON-USERS, 2016

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Background Use of internet websites and geosocial networking mobile applications for sexual and romantic relationships has grown steadily. We examined the prevalence of dating app use and STD, HIV and pregnancy testing among market research survey respondents.

Methods We analyzed 2015–2016 data from the Scarborough/MARS Healthcare Module, which contains data from two market research data sets. In this sample, 199,308 responses were received (18 years), weighted, combined across datasets, and projected to a 2016 U.S. adult population. We also assessed dating app use by demographics, STD, HIV, and pregnancy testing practices in the past year.

Results Of the projected population (n=197,150,967), 6.2% (7.0% men; 5.3% women) reported using dating apps in the past 30 days. Over half of all dating app users (50.3%) were over the ages of 18–34 years. App users were more likely than non-users to report male gender (55.2% vs 48.1%), Hispanic ethnicity (29.4% v 16.2%) and race other than white (31.3% v 23.1%). Fifty-seven percent of dating app users were never married, and 23.8% were married at the time of use. Overall, a higher proportion of dating app users than non-users reported STD testing (6.5% vs 4.0%, PR=1.64) and HIV testing (5.9% vs 3.8%, PR=1.54), in the past year. However, among 18–24 year olds, STD and HIV testing was 14–16% less common among users, compared to non-users. Women using dating apps were more likely than non-users to take pregnancy tests in the past year (8.8% vs 5.6%, PR=1.57).

Conclusion A small proportion of the general population use dating apps, and STD testing rates were low. However, efforts to build upon the higher rates of reported testing for STD, HIV, and pregnancy among app users (e.g., site advertisements, questions during sexual healthcare visits) might improve testing rates in this group. Targeted attention to adolescents and young adults is warranted.

Disclosure No significant relationships.
Injecting drug users (IDUs) are at higher risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and untreated STIs makes IDUs and their partners vulnerable to HIV infection in India especially in case of existing stigma/discrimination and violence against them. This study aims to interlink the stigma, violence and STI/HIV among IDUs.

Methods Data from Integrated biological and behavioural survey (IBBS), 2014–15, conducted among male IDUs in India, has been used in this study. IDUs in IBBS were operationally defined as Men, aged 15 years or more, who has used any psychotropic (addictive/mind altering) substance or drug for recreational or non-medical reasons through injections, at least once in the last 3 months. A total of 3175 interviewed IDUs from Manipur, Nagaland and Maharashtra has been analysed from 278 consenting respondents by trained volunteers by a face-to-face interview.

Results The mean age ± SD of the respondents was 38.48 ± 11.48 years, 70.05% females, mostly married in a monogamous setting (48.6%), with a formal education (86.3%), traders (33.5%), live in rural area (88.5%) while people in the key populations accounted for 9.4% of the participants. 78.4% elicited negative feelings such as depression and shame after diagnosis. About one-third (33.1%) PLHIVs have ever experienced HIV-related stigma and discrimination mostly gossip, physical abuse, and verbal insult, of which about two-thirds (63.2%) occurred in the hospital setting, followed by home/community (25.0%). In addition, 8.6% have been refused a job while 5.0% have lost their job because of their HIV status. Rights awareness by PLHIV does not rule out HIV-related stigma & discrimination experience ($\chi^2 = 5.29$, df = 1, $P = 0.021$).

Conclusion A remarkable proportion of PLHIV still face stigma/discrimination with possible dramatic impact on their treatment and resultant quality of life. Efforts therefore, should be made to ensure PLHIV are not only aware of their rights, but are empowered to seek redress if these rights are violated.

Disclosure No significant relationships.