

# Effects of HIV/AIDS and Gender-Based Violence in the Intersecting Realities

John Walsh\*

Department of Biotechnology, Mount Kenya University, Thika, Kenya

## DESCRIPTION

HIV/AIDS and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are two interconnected issues that have significant impacts on individuals, communities, and societies globally. Both HIV/AIDS and GBV are complex phenomena influenced by social, cultural, economic, and political factors. This essay will delve into the effects of HIV/AIDS and GBV, examining their exchange, individual consequences, and broader societal implications. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system, leading to Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) if left untreated. HIV/AIDS affects individuals of all genders, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. However, certain groups, such as women, LGBTQ+ individuals, sex workers, and marginalized communities, are disproportionately impacted due to social inequalities, stigma, and discrimination. HIV weakens the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to opportunistic infections and diseases. Without treatment, HIV progresses to AIDS, leading to severe health complications and ultimately death. HIV/AIDS-related illnesses contribute significantly to mortality rates worldwide.

People living with HIV/AIDS often face stigma, discrimination, and ostracization from their families, communities, and healthcare providers. This stigma can lead to social isolation, mental health issues, and reluctance to seek testing, treatment, and support services. HIV/AIDS can have extreme economic impacts on individuals and households. Medical expenses, loss of productivity due to illness, and caregiving responsibilities can lead to financial strain, impoverishment, and limited access to education and employment opportunities. HIV/AIDS can strain interpersonal relationships, leading to issues such as rejection, abandonment, and intimate partner violence. Disclosure of HIV status may result in discrimination and violence, particularly in contexts where HIV-related stigma is prevalent. GBV refers to harmful acts perpetrated against individuals based on their gender, encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by GBV, although men and boys also experience such violence. GBV is rooted in unequal power dynamics, patriarchal

norms, and societal attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination.

GBV can result in physical injuries, chronic pain, disabilities, and even death. Survivors may suffer from reproductive health issues, including Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancies, and complications related to unsafe abortions. GBV survivors often experience psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideation. The long-term effects of trauma can impact survivors' mental health, self-esteem, and ability to form healthy relationships. GBV survivors may face social isolation, shame, and blame from their families, communities, and institutions. Stigma surrounding GBV can deter survivors from seeking help, accessing support services, and reporting incidents of violence to law enforcement. GBV can have significant economic consequences for survivors, including loss of income, employment discrimination, and financial dependence on abusive partners. Economic abuse, such as controlling finances and restricting access to resources, exacerbates survivors' vulnerability and impedes their ability to leave abusive situations. The intersections between HIV/AIDS and GBV are multifaceted and interconnected, exacerbating the vulnerabilities and challenges faced by GBV, particularly sexual violence, increases the risk of HIV transmission among survivors due to forced or non-consensual sexual encounters. Lack of autonomy and power dynamics in relationships can limit survivors' ability to negotiate safer sex practices and access HIV prevention methods. GBV can serve as a barrier to HIV testing, treatment, and care-seeking behaviors. Fear of disclosure, stigma, and the prioritization of immediate safety concerns over health needs may prevent survivors from accessing HIV-related services and resources.

Individuals living with HIV/AIDS who are also survivors of GBV face compounded stigma and discrimination, which can further marginalize and disempower them. Intersectional identities, such as being a woman, LGBTQ+, or belonging to a marginalized community, intersect to shape experiences of discrimination and violence. Survivors of GBV who are living with HIV/AIDS may face challenges in accessing comprehensive

**Correspondence to:** John Walsh, Department of Biotechnology, Mount Kenya University, Thika, Kenya, E-mail: johnw@gmail.com

**Received:** 01-Mar-2024, Manuscript No. HICR-24-30318; **Editor assigned:** 04-Mar-2024, PreQC No. HICR-24-30318 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 20-Mar-2024, QC No. HICR-24-30318; **Revised:** 27-Mar-2024, Manuscript No. HICR-24-30318 (R); **Published:** 03-Apr-2024, DOI: 10.35248/2572-0805.24.9.261

**Citation:** Walsh J (2024) Effects of HIV/AIDS and Gender-Based Violence in the Intersecting Realities. HIV Curr Res. 9:261.

**Copyright:** © 2024 Walsh J. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

support services that address their intersecting needs. Health systems and support organizations often operate in silos, lacking integration and coordination to provide holistic care and support for survivors. Addressing the intersecting issues of HIV/AIDS and GBV requires comprehensive, multi-sectoral responses that address underlying structural inequalities and promote gender equality, human rights, and social justice.

Comprehensive sexuality education, gender-sensitive programming, and awareness campaigns are essential for preventing both HIV/AIDS and GBV. Promoting gender equality, consent, and respectful relationships can help challenge harmful norms and behaviours. Health systems and support organizations should integrate HIV/AIDS and GBV services to provide holistic care and support for survivors. This includes ensuring access to HIV testing, treatment, Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), and psychosocial support within GBV service settings. Governments should enact and enforce laws and policies that protect the rights of individuals living with HIV/AIDS and survivors of GBV. This includes criminalizing

GBV, prohibiting discrimination based on HIV status, and ensuring access to justice and redress for survivors. Empowering communities, particularly marginalized groups, to advocate for their rights, access resources, and challenge stigma and discrimination is crucial. Community-led initiatives, peer support networks, and safe spaces can provide avenues for healing, resilience, and collective action.

## CONCLUSION

The effects of HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence are extreme and interconnected, shaping the health, well-being, and life trajectories of individuals and communities worldwide. Addressing these intersecting issues requires comprehensive, rights-based approaches that challenge underlying inequalities, promote gender equality, and prioritize the needs and rights of survivors. By encouraging collective action and solidarity, we can create more inclusive, equitable societies where all individuals can thrive free from violence and discrimination.