



Violence, Abuse and Discrimination: key factors militating against control of HIV/AIDS

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The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) South Africans continue to face considerable challenges, including societal stigma, homophobic violence (particularly corrective rape), and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and infections (particularly Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/AIDS) even when discrimination based on sexual orientation was outlawed by South African's post-apartheid constitution. This study was conducted to ascertain violence, abuse and discrimination against the LGBTI sector as key factors that hinder the smooth implementation of HIV/AIDS programme among sexually minority (LGBTI) group in Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.

However, 20.9% (638) participants did not express their views about discrimination against the LGBTI sector. Social stigma which leads to violence, abuse and discrimination does exist in this institution. Though the knowledge of this societal stigma is in the minority among the students, there is still need to address these issues of violence, abuse and discrimination against LGBTI members in our tertiary institutions to create an enabling environment where people who belong to this sector will come out freely to access programs targeted at the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS.

Enormous advances in HIV/AIDS treatment regimens have fundamentally altered the natural history of the disease and sharply reduced HIV-related morbidity and mortality in countries where such treatments are accessible. The advent of anti-retroviral drugs in the late 1980s began a revolution in the management of HIV, which can be seen as analogous to the use of penicillin for treating bacterial infections

Self-structured questionnaires were used to collect data by simple randomization selection. A total of 3048 participants (1285 male and 1763 female), aged 17-38 years, participated in this study. Though, a small number (987, 32.4%) of the participants witnessed violence against people in same gender relationship, 1557 (51.1%) participants were not aware of violence against the LGBTI sector, while 504 (16.5%) were ignorant of the societal stigma. Participants in this study indicated that the LGBTI sector in this particular tertiary institution face challenges such as abuse which includes physical.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) case study was undertaken by the National Population Unit (NPU) to assess the activities that are run by the organisation OUT. This study forms part of 10 such studies with regard to youth which was undertaken by the NPU. The study made use of a mixed method approach where the qualitative aspect was the dominant method. The main aim of the study was to assess how OUT provides Psychosocial Support Services to the (LGBTI) community including HIV counselling, general lifestyle counselling as well as advice and support. This programme focuses on the psychosocial well-being of LGBTI individuals and communities. This psychosocial support services forms part of the mission and vision of OUT. The study found that LGBTI individuals still experience stigma and discrimination although the South African constitution and Bill of Rights ensure the protection of the rights of all South African citizens. The study made some recommendations in this regard.