

Abstract

Introduction: HIV/AIDS epidemic has become one of the most rampant infections known to humanity. Although steps have been taken to eliminate HIV-related negative attitudes towards both the infection and People Living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa, studies depicts that at least one-third of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) have been discriminated and/or attacked, as a result of their HIV-positive status (Human Sciences Research Council, 2015). This research study sought to explore gender and sociodemographic differences in attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). Furthermore, explore other demographic and socioeconomic characteristics that influence attitudes.

Methodology: The study utilised secondary data obtained from the South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey (SABSSM) published in 2008. The total number of individuals sampled for the survey was 23 369, who are between the ages 2-99 years old. Due to the population of interest being youth (15-24 years old) the analytic sample size utilised in this study was 5 344 (N). Data was managed using the STATA 12 and was analysed in a way that answers the objectives of the study. The outcome variable was attitudes towards PLWHA and the predictors were sex, age, highest level of education, marital status, home language, employment status, HIV-testing, Condom use, and race. The data analysis was done in different phases, for descriptive analysis the study provides a series of frequency tables and graphs. A chi-square test was conducted, to test for the association between socio-demographic factors and attitudes towards PLWHA, and for multivariate analysis the study employed Binary Logistic Regression.

Results: The results showed that 75% of youth have positive attitude while 24% have negative attitude towards PLWHA. Positive attitude towards PLWHA was not associated to gender of youth's. Socio-economic indicators such as age and condom use have indicated a positive association to positive attitude towards PLWHA.

Conclusion: The prevalence of stigma and discrimination needs to be addressed in South Africa, and more programs needs to be implemented. PLWHA not only have to suffer from medical problems which can deplete quality of life, but also affects the broader health perspective and increase social prejudice.

Key Words: Stigma, Discrimination, People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)