Marriage as Risk
A mixed method Study of Influence of Sociocultural Factors on Women Living with HIV/AIDS in Delhi, India

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Women constitute almost 50\% of the population but the HIV which was centred around male population is gradually affecting women despite their non-risky behaviour. There is a need to look into the sociocultural interplay.

Background

Biological vulnerability:
Sociocultural vulnerability: Low status, illiteracy, restricted mobility, silence over matters of sex and sexuality.
Outcome of patriarchy (male dominance) and internalized patriarchal values by women: Domestic violence, trafficking, violation of reproductive rights, rape.

Gender inequality index: India ranks 135 HDI and 122 in GII (UNDP HDI, 2015).

Methods:

Mixed method research employing semi-structured interview was conducted after obtaining consent; with 105 HIV positive persons. Focus group discussions and case study of willing participants were taken.
- Gender: 60 males, 40 females 05 Transgender.
- Marital Status: 63 married, 19 unmarried, 23 ever married.
- Sexual Orientation: 84 heterosexual, 14 homosexual and 07 bisexual.

Results:

- All 40 females were diagnosed with HIV after Marriage
- 10 underwent delivery after HIV diagnosis.
- Only 01 had consented for expansion of family.
- 21 were diagnosed first.
- Access to healthcare services was significantly affected by gender.
- Disclosure: 33 males and 01 female did not disclose.

Substance abuse by Gender

Commercial sex activity by Gender

HIV diagnosis due to risk behavior

HIV diagnosis due to Partner's positive status

Male partner knew that he had HIV

Conlusion

Combined results of men’s and women’s behavior reflect cultural factors playing a significant role in increased vulnerability resulting in increasing number of women getting infected, with marriage being the only risk. This bias is further accentuated post infection.

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