



A STUDY OF SOCIOCULTURAL INFLUENCE HIV POSITIVE HOMOSEXUAL MALES IN DELHI, INDIA

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INTRODUCTION:

In India homosexuality is socially, morally and legally unacceptable. Excluding homosexuals from mainstream society has always been considered a politically, socially and now legally correct approach. This is despite the fact that this country has been the most vocal and explicit about homosexuality since the times of Kamasutra (written in 400BC). Culture influences the way the life of HIV+ homosexual person is lived resulting in creating a negative self-image and guilt.



METHOD:

As a larger mixed method research, in-depth interviews with 105 HIV positive consenting adults were held to understand the cultural and societal factors influencing positive living.

- ✦ 60(59%) were males and 40(39%) were females 5(5%) were transgender.
- ✦ 14 reported to be homosexuals, 7 bisexual and rest 84 heterosexual.

Case studies and FGD were held to understand exclusion, vulnerability and positive living.



RESULTS:

The risk behavior, condom use and commercial sex participation was affected by gender significantly p^2 0.001. On a closer look at HIV + homosexuals.

- ✦ 07 out of 14 were having unprotected sex.
- ✦ 09 commercial sex.
- ✦ 08 were alcoholic.
- ✦ 08 were diagnosed due to risk behavior and 05 due to illness.
- ✦ 08 did not disclose HIV (04 MSM & 04 TG).

FGD reflected strong social exclusion. Layers of stigma was faced at interpersonal and societal level. A startling revelation was that many were abused during adolescence.



CONCLUSION:

The conservative outlook for homosexual people and a negative legal framework in India force them to lead a dubious life leading to internalization of stigma. A continuum is identified in the degrees of homosexuality due to interplay of sociocultural factors. How they creating a balance as HIV positive homosexual is explored through Focus Group Discussion and narratives.

01

"My Uncle who use to visit me touch me, inappropriately. Initially I felt awkward but I enjoyed it later so did not tell my parents" (A HIV^{ve} male homosexual).

When I shared about my sexuality to my father, he become hysterical and said "My son has died, My son has died." (A positive male homosexual when he disclosed his sexuality).

02

03

I kept on denying for marriage I could not delay it further. Just to keep my sexuality a secret I had to marry and have a child. It was my responsibility to my parents. (A positive homosexual male where wife too become infected).

I cannot share my HIV status to society as sharing it would imply that I am sexually active (An unmarried HIV positive homosexual male 20 Year).

04

05

"When I disclosed about my sexuality to my wife, she divorced me".

"When my friend died no one from his family came to the funeral. I managed it with other homosexual".

06