

Student Research Conference 2011 Abstract

Globally, 33-39 million people and 600,000-950,000 people in the United States are living with HIV/AIDS. Nationally, the primary affected group with HIV/AIDS has shifted from a white gay/bisexual male population to one that includes women and people of color. This exploratory study is one of few that explores the impact of multiple stigmatizing attributes, including race, gender, and a highly stigmatized chronic disorder. HIV/AIDS is so stigmatizing because it is primarily associated with homosexuality, illness, and death. As part of a larger NIMH funded project that examines coping with HIV/AIDS stigma in rural New England, the studied population includes women of color diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The semi-structured interviews, equipped with 56 items, were delivered to twelve women of color diagnosed with HIV or AIDS. Interview analysis with qualitative software program Atlas ti enabled conclusions to be drawn regarding HIV/AIDS disclosure, knowledge about HIV, self-perceptions, community support, and difficulties of living with HIV/AIDs as a woman of color living in rural New England.