

A qualitative study of intersectional stigma among older adults living with HIV who are victims of childhood sexual abuse

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BACKGROUND

- ❖ Intersectional stigma is based upon co-occurring and intersecting identities or conditions and occurs at multiple levels of influence.
- ❖ Intersectional stigma has been repeatedly associated with poor health behaviors and outcomes.
- ❖ The effect of intersectional stigma among older adults are particularly challenging due to issues related to ageism, loss of social support, and comorbidities.

PURPOSE

- ❖ To examine the impact of multiple stigmas on older adults living with HIV who are victims of childhood sexual abuse.

METHODS

- ❖ Qualitative, descriptive study of 24 participants from the immunology clinic in South Carolina
- ❖ Participants (aged 50-67) included 12 males, 11 females, 1 transgender (male-to-female); 66% Black, 25% White
- ❖ In-depth semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded.
- ❖ Using thematic analysis, we first transcribed the audio-recordings verbatim, then generated initial codes using a line-by-line approach.
- ❖ Followed by an iterative process of identifying, reviewing, defining, and reconciliation of codes.
- ❖ Then naming and refining of emergent themes

RESULTS

Four main themes emerged:

❖ Depression

“Not really. I’m okay. My HIV has a lot to do with my mental, my mental the way I think I guess because I’m afraid somebody I come across somebody where I will be around nobody that’s why I don’t want to be around people”

❖ Lack of HIV disclosure

“just staying by myself minding my own business dealing with it like that makes me alright. Peace of mind. I won’t have to worry about what other people think. I gotta worry about nobody say, uh you nasty uh way over, you know, come on I don’t have to worry about, I stay by myself. I don’t bother nobody”

❖ Limited support

“I was when I first found out, I told my family and my family told my job because I worked in the kitchen with children that could follow authority level of discrimination. I dealt with it a lot of time but like I said, is how you pick and choose your days and I just kept believing in Lord and speaking to him and get my strength. And that then they will get in my way, you know, basically”.

❖ Reduced intimacy

“Being I’m single, maybe relationship wise you know, knowing I mean people have you know, the involved with somebody and tell them what she says and the reaction that you had like a failure with a stigma at first.”

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

- ❖ The complexity of multiple stigmas profoundly shapes life experiences, opportunities, and mental health of older adults living with HIV.
- ❖ Understanding the impact of multiple stigmas on older adults living with HIV with a childhood sexual abuse history may help to inform stigma intervention programs for this vulnerable population.
- ❖ This study highlights that public health programs need to consider the impact of intersectional stigma in order to promote the wellbeing of and improve quality of life for older adults living with HIV.



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