

JOINT EVENT

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Living with, living apart: Stigmatization of HIV/AIDS patients in PakistanSarfraz Khan¹ and Sundas Ayyub²¹Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan²Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Pakistan

The main objective of the current research was to understand the level of stigmatization faced by HIV/AIDS positive patients in the twin cities (Islamabad and Rawalpindi) in Pakistan. The panacea of a smooth and comfortable society lies upon awareness and understanding of certain phenomenon; which forces others to discriminate people on the basis of stereotypes. In order to shape this strategy a primary area of focus is to provide the awareness regarding the death-defying diseases; like HIV/AIDS. The importance of providing information about this precarious disease is to eradicate the stigmatization done with HIV positive patients. It is very necessary to minimize this stigmatization as it hinders the process of treatment and proper care. The present study focused to understand the levels of stigmatization, its various dimensions and impacts on the HIV positive patients' lives who were presently admitted in Islamabad and Rawalpindi hospitals in Pakistan. The current research was mainly conducted by using anthropological research methods such as: key informant, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of the respondents. The patients currently diagnosed with HIV/AIDS were selected from the two hospitals (Rehabilitation Center and Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences) in the twin cities. The results show that the majority of the HIV positive patients were stigmatized by their family members as well as the relatives and others which directly influence their health. The research could be helpful in devising policies regarding the inclusion of HIV/AIDS patients to the mainstream of the society as it indicated that in most of the cases these were the close family members and colleagues who stigmatized the patients.

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