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Knowledge and stigmatization on HIV/AIDS among women of reproductive age in Ethiopia

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HIV/AIDS stigma persists to be a major public health challenge in Ethiopia. This study examines knowledge about HIV/AIDS and factors explaining stigmatizing attitude towards people living with the virus based on demographic and health survey data collected from 15,786 women in 2011. The result shows that considerable percentage of rural women had inadequate knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The likelihood of having adequate knowledge about HIV/AIDS was significantly higher for relatively better educated women and lower in Afar, Somali, and Gambella regions and Dire Dawa City. Women with higher level of education and better access to media had lower likelihood of stigmatizing people living with the virus. Besides, respondents with adequate knowledge about HIV/AIDS had lower likelihood of stigmatization. The results entail that HIV/AIDS stigma in Ethiopia is partly explained by the level of knowledge of the people about HIV/AIDS and socio-cultural factors that shape their perception of the epidemic and infected persons. Hence, awareness raising campaign that considers the socio-cultural context in which stigma occurs is required to eliminate stigmatization.

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