



Discrimination between HIV negative and positive MSM: Results from the “AIDES & toi” survey

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Background

Stigma and discrimination have been identified as major obstacles to effective responses to the AIDS epidemic. In France, in response to AIDS and homophobia, gay men first provided solidarity and support to their peers. But more than 20 years after the beginning of the epidemic, when many MSM are used to serosorting, is there a gap between gay/bisexual men according to their HIV status?

The aim of this study was to analyse discrimination between MSM in relation to their HIV serostatus.



Method

A cross-sectional survey was carried out in May 2005 for one week. A self-administered questionnaire was systematically offered to everyone in contact with AIDES - the largest French NGO - throughout France, in various gay venues such as saunas or sex clubs.

It included items addressing standardized questions used in previous cross sectional studies about discrimination, the circumstances of this discrimination, social and sexual life.

Among gay men, reports of discrimination were compared according to their HIV serostatus.

Results

Among the 660 gay men, 50,3% were HIV positive. 7% were HCV positive. 13% were HBV positive.

Whole MSM sample (n=660):

- Average age was 40.
- 54% had no regular partner. 14% had children
- 7% were migrants.
- 50% were unemployed.

HIV Positive MSM sample (n=332):

- Average age was 46.
- 73% had no regular partner.
- 67% were unemployed.
- 37% had no stable housing.
- The average of seropositivity was 12 years.

Overall HIV-positive gay men were more likely to report having been discriminated against during their lifetime (51.2% versus 35.7%, $p < .001$). Among those who reported discrimination, while HIV-positive gay men were less likely to report discrimination in daily life than HIV-negative gay men (OR=0.3 CI(95%)=[0.2-0.6], $p < .001$), they were more likely to report discrimination in their social network, in sexual intercourse and in their community (OR=1.6 CI(95%)=[1.0-2.6], $p = 0.05$).

Conclusions

HIV negative MSM reported more discrimination in their daily life. HIV positive MSM are more likely to be discriminated against by their own peers in relationships or sexual intercourse.

Furthermore, perhaps it is time to question the gay community to see whether solidarity is still on its agenda.

	Total n=660 n (%)	HIV serostatus		p
		No 328 (49,7%) n (%)	Yes 332 (50,3%) n (%)	
Have you ever been discriminated against?				
No	373 (56,5)	211 (64,3)	162 (48,8)	<,001
Yes	287 (43,5)	117 (35,7)	170 (51,2)	
For those who have been:		HIV serostatus		
	Total n=287	No 117	Yes 170	p
Where did it happen?				
At work	109 (38,0)	41,9 (41,9)	60 (35,3)	0,259
In health services	56 (19,5)	10 (8,5)	46 (27,1)	<,001
Relationships	98 (34,1)	36 (30,8)	62 (36,5)	0,317
Sexual intercourse	48 (16,7)	10 (8,5)	38 (22,4)	0,002
Daily life	157 (54,7)	82 (70,1)	75 (44,1)	<,001
In my community	51 (17,8)	17 (14,5)	34 (20,0)	0,234
Discrimination in relationships, sexual intercourse and community:				
No	145 (50,5)	67 (57,3)	78 (45,9)	0,058 OR 1,6 [1 - 2,6]
Yes	142 (49,5)	50 (42,7)	92 (54,1)	

