HIV-related stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings: Findings from the STIGMASurveyUK 2015

Background

- The People Living with HIV Stigma Survey UK 2015 is a collaborative community-led initiative that captures the feelings and experiences of living with HIV today.
- A total of 1576 people were recruited from 120 community organisations and 47 HIV clinics throughout the United Kingdom (UK) and completed an anonymous online survey. Responses were stored securely and analysed at PHE with community engagement.
- We examine the association between negative experiences of treatment in healthcare with worry about and avoidance of care. Univariate and multivariate analyses were performed.

Results

Figure 1 shows the proportion of participants who had worried about different treatment in healthcare, had avoided care, or had experienced negative treatment in healthcare in the last 12 months.

631 (40%) people experienced negative treatment including being treated differently to others in any setting, feeling treatment has been delayed or refused, experiencing negative comments or the use of excess barrier protection, and being given the last appointment of the day by a healthcare worker.

89% of people who experienced negative treatment had worried about being treated differently. This compared to 36% among those who did not experience negative treatment (aOR 14.67, 95% CI 10.51, 20.51) after adjustment for demographics, time since diagnosis, other health conditions, diagnosed depression, injecting drug use and self-image.

53% of people who experienced negative treatment had avoided care when required compared to 10% of those who had not experienced negative treatment (aOR 9.33, CI6.74, 12.91) after adjustment. It was not possible to determine a temporal cause-effect relationship.

Conclusions

- Negative experiences in healthcare settings are strongly and independently associated with worry about care and avoiding care when required, respectively.
- Sensitivity and awareness training targeted at healthcare workers aimed at people living with HIV is required in order to reduce anticipated and experienced stigma in healthcare settings.

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