

emerging issues

AIDS 20/20
 amfAR BRIEFINGS

Women, HIV, and Stigma
Results from a National Survey
From Insight to Action

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amfAR Survey

- Today, we are releasing the results of an amfAR, the Foundation for AIDS Research survey, conducted by Harris Interactive, funded by Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, and the MAC AIDS Fund
- Motivated by the changing face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic
- Reveals pervasive stigma surrounding women and HIV/AIDS




Survey Objectives

Understand:

- Perceptions of women with HIV
- Other HIV/AIDS-related beliefs, behaviors, and opinions

With a focus on:

- Differences across demographic populations (gender & race)
- Opportunities for public education about women with HIV

Primary goals:

- ★ Increase awareness about women and HIV/AIDS
- ★ Take action




Topics

- Overview of the Epidemic
- Women, HIV, and Stigma
- Survey Methods
- Discussion of Key Findings
- A Call to Action: Policy Recommendations






Overview of the Epidemic

- **Global:**
 - 33.2 million people living with HIV in 2007
 - 2.5 million new infections in 2007
 - 2.1 million AIDS deaths in 2007
- **Domestic:**
 - Over 1 million people living with HIV/AIDS
 - Over 500,000 AIDS deaths to date
 - Blacks (including African Americans), who make up approximately 13% of the US population, accounted for almost half of the estimated number of HIV/AIDS cases diagnosed (2005)
 - Over 40,000 new infections each year with upward revisions expected




Source: UNAIDS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Women and HIV

Global:

- In 2007, 46.3% of people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide (15.4 million) were women
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, 74% of young people aged 15-24 living with HIV are female






Women and HIV



Domestic

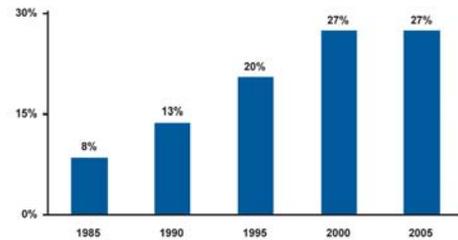
- Women accounted for 27% of the estimated 37,163 new diagnoses of HIV/AIDS (2005)
- More than triple the rate of 8% in 1985
- HIV infection was the 5th leading cause of death among all U.S. women aged 34-44, and the sixth leading cause of death among all U.S. women aged 25-34 (2005)
- African American and Hispanic women represented 24% of the female population in the United States but accounted for 82% of the total AIDS diagnoses that year (2005)



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Women as a Proportion of New AIDS Diagnoses, 2005

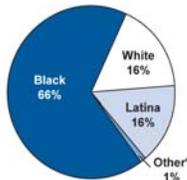


Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

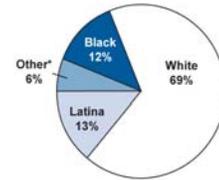


Estimated AIDS Diagnoses and US Female Population, by Ethnicity 2005

New AIDS Diagnoses Among Women



U.S. Female Population



*Other includes Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native women.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



HIV/AIDS in Washington, DC

- Women accounted for ~ 1/3 of newly reported HIV/AIDS cases from 2001-2006 in Washington, DC
 - 9 out of 10 of these cases were in African American women
- Number of DC women living with AIDS has increased by more than 76% over the past six years
- That means that if Washington DC were a country, its estimated HIV prevalence of 1 in 20 adults would rank it among the top 25 in the world
 - Higher than half of the nations in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Nigeria



Source: Washington, DC Department of Health
UNAIDS 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic



Women, HIV, and Stigma



What is Stigma?

- Stigma is an attribute that reduces a person in the minds of others "from whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one"¹
- Leads to marginalization and exclusion of a certain population of individuals
- Many types of stigma: societal stigma, self-stigma, etc.



1. Goffman (1963)



Factors that Contribute to Stigma

Factors that contribute to HIV/AIDS-related stigma:

- HIV/AIDS is a life-threatening disease
- Fear of contracting the disease
- Disease association with behaviors that are already stigmatized in many societies
- Assumption that infected individuals are responsible for contracting their illnesses
- Beliefs that HIV/AIDS is the result of a moral fault, such as promiscuity



Women and Stigma

- Women may be stigmatized even more than men for
 - Poverty, fewer resources, and social inequities
 - Race
 - For being sexually active
- Blamed as carriers, either as prostitutes infecting men or mothers infecting their infants
- Their distinctive symptoms have been ignored
- Services addressing women's needs have been lacking
- Excluded from drug clinical trials

Shame and blame for women is a major obstacle to prevention and treatment



amfAR Survey Methods



Survey Areas



Survey Sample

Recruitment:

- Potential participants were recruited to participate via email from Harris Interactive's multi-million member panel of US respondents.
- The invitation made no mention of HIV or AIDS in an effort to avoid biasing the decision to respond.

Screening Criteria:

- 18-44 years old
- US resident
- Willing to disclose their race



Sample Characteristics

Sample	N=4831
Black Men	12%
Black Women	13%
Hispanic Men	11%
Hispanic Women	12%
Caucasian Men	25%
Caucasian Women	27%

In order to understand potential demographic differences in attitudes toward women with HIV, completed a total of 4831 interviews to ensure adequate sample size to evaluate by gender and race.



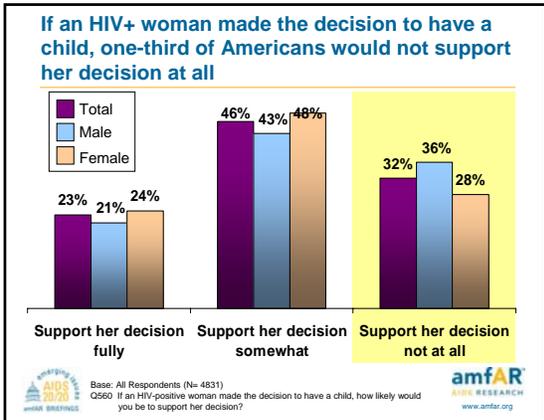
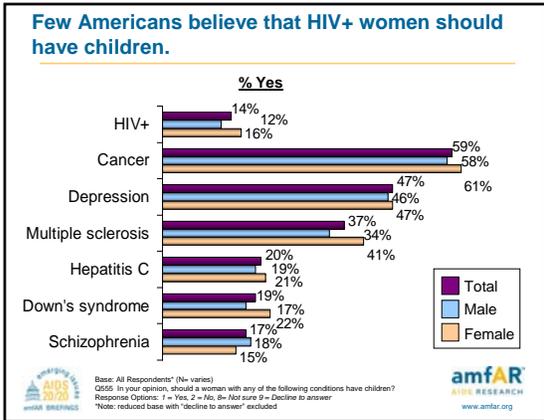
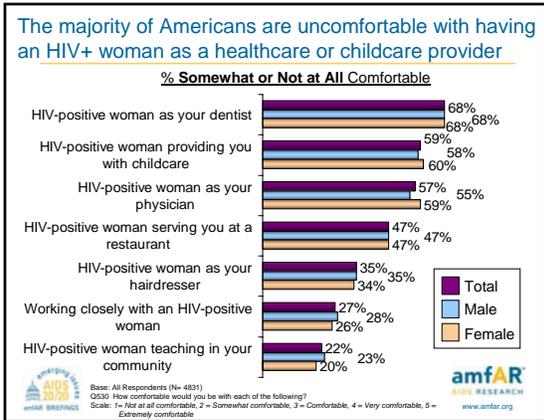
Data were weighted so results reflect attitudes of entire population



amfAR Survey Findings

Attitudes Towards HIV+ Women

- Overall, Americans are uncomfortable with HIV+ women – not just in intimate relationships, but also in professional and casual interactions within the community
- 1 in 5 Americans would not be comfortable with having an HIV+ woman as a close friend

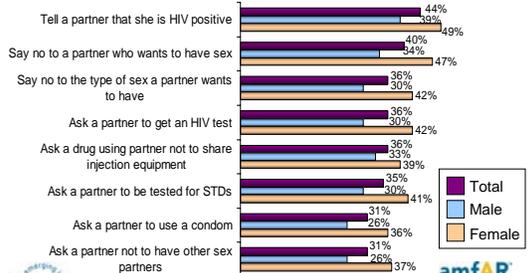


Gender-based Violence

- Women are more likely than men to be affected by gender-based violence
- Many people do not realize pervasiveness of this type of violence
- Approximately 20% of women report that fear of gender-based violence has inhibited their sexual or HIV-related communication with a partner

Women are more likely than men to think fear of violence inhibits a woman's willingness to communicate about HIV risk

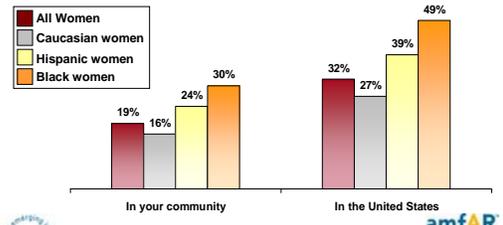
Fear of Gender-based Violence Inhibits A Lot or A Great Deal



Base: All Respondents (N= 4931)
 Q910: To what extent do you think fear of violence (physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual) inhibits a woman's willingness to...?
 Scale: 1= Not at all, 2= A little, 3= A moderate amount, 4= A lot, 5= A great deal

Hispanic and Black women are more likely than Caucasian women to think that most or all women are personally affected by gender-based violence.

% who Believe Most or All Women are Affected Personally by Gender-based Violence in...



Base: All Female Respondents (N= 2520)
 Q916: How many women do you think are personally affected by gender-based violence...?
 Scale: 1= None, 2= A few, 3= Some, 4= Most, 5= All

HIV Communication and Education

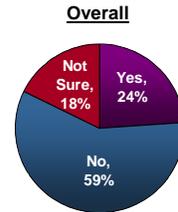
- A critical strategy to combat stigma is education and communication
- Less than 1/3 (32%) of Americans discuss HIV with their spouse or partner
- Less than 1/5 (19%) discuss HIV with potential sexual partners

➔ Need to increase communication and education about HIV/AIDS

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59% of Americans believe that young women do not receive sufficient information about sexual and reproductive health

Young Women Receive Sufficient Information about Sexual and Reproductive Health



Base: All Respondents (N= 4931)
 Q1005: In your opinion, do young women, ages 12 - 18, get sufficient information about sexual and reproductive health?

HIV Testing

- One way to combat HIV/AIDS stigma is to make HIV testing routine
 - CDC currently recommends informed HIV screening for patients in all health care settings
- Survey results provided insights into public attitudes about HIV testing:
 - Nearly 40% were sure they had not been tested for HIV
 - A majority (80%) of these respondents said it was because they either “knew” they did not have HIV or because it was not necessary

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HIV Testing

- However, 65% support making HIV testing part of standard routine healthcare
- This acceptance may be partially linked to the belief that HIV testing occurs more frequently than it does
 - 67% mistakenly assume they are automatically screened when they are tested for other sexually transmitted infections
 - 50% believe that women are automatically tested during prenatal exams

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From Insight to Action: Ten Recommendations

1. Make women a priority in national HIV/AIDS strategies
2. Increase public knowledge and decrease stigma and discrimination
3. Increase funding and resources for female-focused HIV/AIDS Programs
4. Reduce barriers faced by women in disadvantaged populations
5. Increase women's access to HIV testing and counseling services



From Insight to Action: Ten Recommendations

6. Increase women's access to healthcare
7. Invest in the development of female-controlled prevention methods
8. Scale-up prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programs
9. Ensure women's sexual, psychological, and physical safety
10. Enhance women's rights, empowerment, and leadership in society



Shattering Stigma Involves a Sustained Commitment by All Sectors of Society

