

# **DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST LGBTI PERSONS; ITS EFFECT ON HIV/AIDS INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR MSM IN ABUJA NIGERIA.**

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## **BACKGROUND**

Violence against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and intersex persons is propelled by prejudice rooted in certain interpretations of culture and religion, based on low levels of knowledge on LGBTIQ issues. These bring about sexual violence, exploitation, barbaric traditional practices. Stigma and discrimination among LGBTI in healthcare facilities in Abuja Nigeria is on the increase. The Objective is to evaluate how violence, Stigma and discrimination affect HIV care services amongst MSM Population in Abuja.

## **METHOD**

- Clinic based study; Between January 2018 to December 2018, Clients who visited the Clinic were given questionnaire to evaluate their general satisfaction, exposure to violence, in relation to stigma among MSM.
- Focus group discussion, during which 90% of persons who were into relationship shared their experiences of discrimination in public healthcare, family members, partners, neighbours and law enforcement agents.
- The Peer Educators model was also adopted to further bridge the barrier of not speaking up, being that peer groups often confide in each other on issues they ordinarily would not disclose to family, and health workers.

## **RESULT**

Between January 2018 to December 2018 cases recorded include;

TYPES OF VIOLATIONS	NUMBER OF CASES
Blackmail and Extortion	15
Harassment	2
Unlawful detention and arrest	5
Murder	1
Stigma/discrimination	3
Invasion of privacy	3
Mob Violence and attack	3
Spiritual exorcism	4

Finding includes Low turn out to access care and treatment for HIV due to fear of Violence, Stigma, and discrimination. Unwillingness to freely disclose HIV Status to Partners leading to new infections, Religious cleansing subjecting victims to a confinement without access to treatment.

## **CONCLUSION**

Violence, stigma and discrimination thrive in Abuja because of the discriminatory laws, which provide an atmosphere that encourages impunity by perpetrators. Fear among MSM population from freely coming out to access care, due to failure of the State and Non State Actors to acknowledge violence against LGBTQI in Abuja as criminal