

Gender Discrimination and HIV-Related Exposures, Risk Factors for Women:

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(Oral and Poster)

OBJECTIVE:

The aim of this study is to examine how gender and power imbalances can be extended and elaborated upon to identify the exposures and risk factors that increase women's vulnerability to HIV.

KEY POINTS:

There are mainly two types of gender based inequities in our society-DIVISION OF LABOUR & DIVISION OF POWER.

The DIVISION OF LABOUR refers to the allocation of women and men to certain occupations. Often, women are assigned different and unequal positions relative to men.

Women are often delegated the responsibility of "women's work."

DIVISION OF POWER - Power can be defined as having the capacity to influence the action of others. Women in power imbalanced relationships tend to depend on their male partner because men usually bring more financial assets (i.e., money, status) to the relationship. The power inequities are manifested as PHYSICAL EXPOSURE in public health.

METHOD:

A random probability sample of 100 women was selected in NCR. Questionnaire and focussed group discussion were used to collect information regarding the usage of HIV prevention materials.

RESULTS:

- Compared with women having higher incomes, women having lower incomes were less likely to use condoms. Women living in poverty were not able to afford HIV prevention materials and also were not aware of the facilities provided by government for prevention thus, increasing their vulnerability to HIV.
- Women having low socio-economic status face sexual violence more frequently which further increases their vulnerability to HIV.
- Women have limited Self-Efficacy in Negotiating and Using Condoms is an important Behavioural Risk Factor.