

Stigma and Mental Health Among Persons Living with HIV in Michigan, 2015-2019

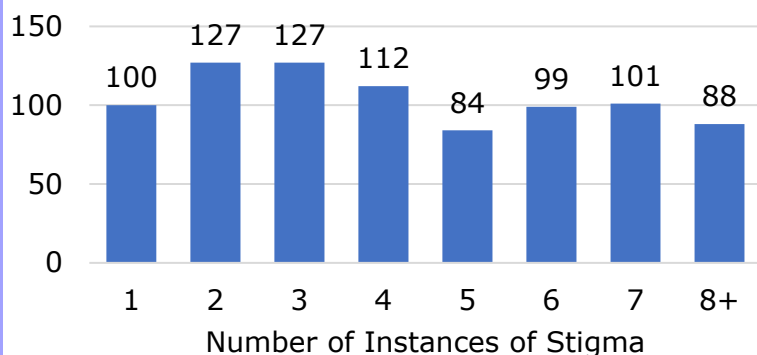
Medical Monitoring Project (MMP)

What is Stigma?

Stigma is a word used to refer to the beliefs and misconceptions (usually negative) that describe a group of people. In relation to HIV, stigma can refer to many beliefs both from those outside of the HIV+ community and within it. People living with HIV (PLWH) are sometimes associated with ideas of “unclean” behaviors, stereotypes associated with people who have HIV (LGBTQ+ communities), and internalized beliefs about oneself (people will look down on me for having HIV).

Stigma can have a negative effect on the mental and physical health of those affected by it. People who have worse physical health are more likely to have experienced stigma. Experiencing stigma is also associated with being more likely to have mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.

Frequency of Number of Instances of Stigma



MMP

The Medical Monitoring Project is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded project. It includes an interview with PLWH as well as a medical record abstraction to view relevant health information for the two years prior to the survey. The interview is funded in 23 jurisdictions within the United States and has been collecting data on the HIV+ community since 2005.

In Michigan, the MMP helps provide information on the ways PLWH are handling their diagnosis and their relationships with those around them. This information can help develop programs and pinpoint areas of concern or highlight areas of successful intervention.



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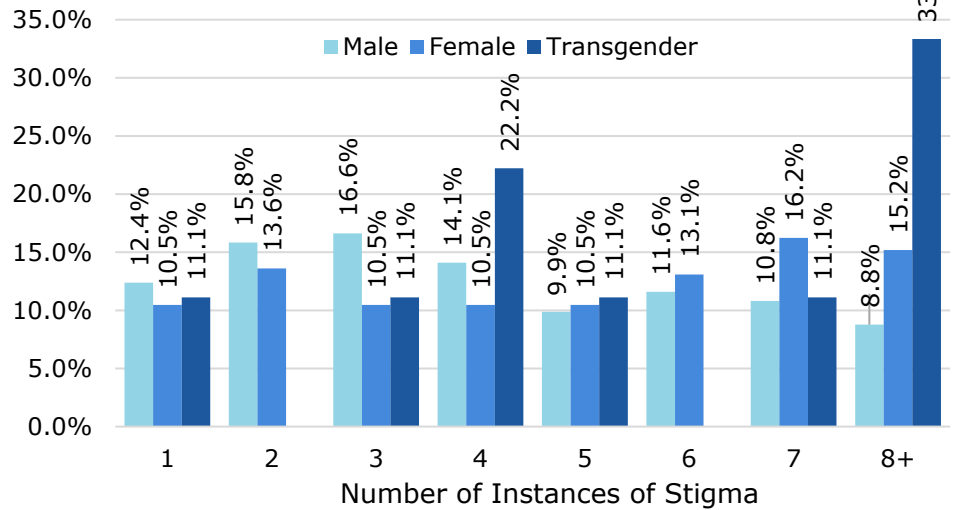
58%

of participants experienced

4 or more
instances of stigma

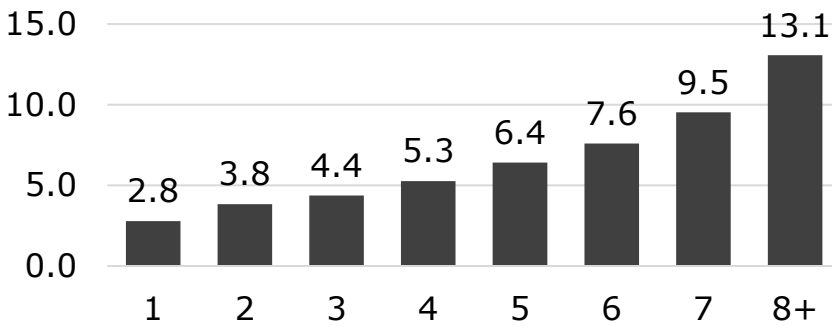


Stigma by Gender



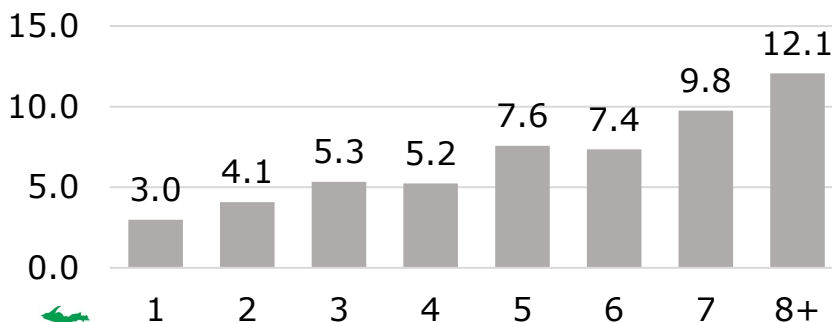
One-third of transgender persons have experienced eight or more instances of stigma. Almost 60% of males have experienced four or fewer instances of stigma, as compared to 45% of females and 44% of transgender persons.

Average Depression Score by Instances of Stigma



Participants who reported experiencing more instances of stigma also scored higher on the depression scale than those with fewer instances. The average depression score for someone experiencing eight or more instances of stigma was almost five times higher than someone experiencing only one instance of stigma.

Average Generalized Anxiety Score by Instances of Stigma



There is also an association with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) score. Those experiencing eight or more instances of stigma scored about four times higher on average than those with only one instance of stigma.