

ICASA 2021

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

TRACK D LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE



Track D RAPPOREUR TEAM

TRACK D members at work



Members and Home Countries

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- Covid-19 pandemic has been found to **impact psychologically** on people living with HIV in America, Europe, Asia and Africa.
- **Social isolation amongst HIV positive women** in Nigeria has been shown to be associated with Major Depressive Disorders, mainly in the newly diagnosed younger generation.
- **Social support** has been shown to decrease likelihood of depressive disorders requiring treatment in PLHIV



- Rise in cases of **teenage pregnancy and child marriages** in Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, during Covid-19 pandemic, primarily during strict lockdown periods. It led to a rise in intergenerational relationships, rolled back gains of High School retention and completion and Increased the burden of HIV/AIDS
- Associated rise in **mother to child HIV transmission** in mothers <20 years in Zimbabwe.



- **Access to HIV treatment**, sexual and reproductive health among adolescent girls and women in Kenya was affected during the covid-19 pandemic.
- Similarly, access to ART, blood tests (CD4,VL) due to the burden of covid19 was seen as a major concern amongst these populations
- **Barriers to provision** of HIV/AIDS, SGBV, and SHRH health services in key populations in West and Central Africa.
- **Rise in Gender-based violence** - Studies from Ghana showed that physical and sexual abuse among female sex workers was more prevalent among young, unmarried, roaming sex workers, with history of substance use, which also dependent on place of region.
- **Health care service delivery-** was not prioritized for young adults and key populations as they feared contracting Covid-19. This was a concern for this population, leading to many fearing to disclose their HIV status. Many of these individuals were aware of their virological status not being suppressed and others were defaulters.



- **Stigma and discrimination** has been identified as a major influencing factor to the non-adherence of HIV treatment among LGBTQI youths and other key populations.
- HIV and STI's among AGYW in Botswana and some parts of Africa **still remain a taboo subject**. This calls for strong advocacy and tailor-made programmes to stem the tide.
- Across Africa, there is **lack of commitment by governments** to decriminalise same sex relationships, enact laws that will make same sex marriages legal as well as pass anti-discrimination laws aimed at reducing discrimination against LGBT and other key populations in respect of access to: healthcare, employment, housing and other fundamentals of life.
- Local authorities in pygmy populations were approached by Central African Regional authorities for identifying knowledge on and health demands regarding HIV/AIDS and Sexual/Reproductive health, with the provision of awareness and family planning services.
- Involvement of community members on recommendations, including community members sharing person experiences, was productive. Advocacy intervention needs to continuously be organised for these communities.

1. Social and interpersonal support have shown to have a positive impact on preventing depressive disorders requiring treatment. **Post natal clubs for mothers** and young women is being found in South Africa to be very useful as a psychosocial measure of overcoming stigma and discrimination.
2. Research from South Africa, Zimbabwe suggest that **Social Media** has become the new wave for reaching the youth during COVID-19 in: HIV data collection and programming, utilising social influencers and targeting and awareness creation. It is recommended that investment in health literacy amongst adolescent girls boys, and women in Africa should utilise digital skills as these populations preferred the mode of digital follow up to be via phone calls.
3. African health systems need to be more resilient- managing emergent health disasters and still maintaining quality health services for all, particularly the HIV/AIDS infected and affected communities. There is the need for greater awareness creation and capacity building of communities on viral load suppression. This could be achieved by *introducing different population clubs on the suppression of HIV viral load* as it improves longer lives. To this end, health care facilities to decongest by extending working hours and operating on weekends.