Study Examines Intersectional Stigma and Psychosocial Well-being among Men Who have Sex with Men Living with HIV

Research led by faculty in the South Carolina SmartState Center for Healthcare Quality and the Department of Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior in the University of South Carolina’s Arnold School of Public Health have completed a study examining intersectional stigma and psychosocial well-being among men who have sex with men living with HIV. The study was published in AIDS Care and led by post-doctoral fellow Xueying Yang, assistant professor Shan Qiao, and professor Xiaoming Li.

“The existing literature suggests a negative impact of intersectional stigma on multiple aspects of psychosocial well-being among individuals with multiple stigmatized identities,” says Dr. Yang. “However, such impact remains poorly understood.”

With this study, the team investigated the association between intersectional stigma and psychosocial well-being among 193 men who have sex with men (MSM) living with HIV. Based on their survey responses, the participants were grouped into “high” vs “low” on each type of stigma.

“Our results indicated a significant interaction effect of two types of stigma on depression, anxiety, quality of life, and psychological resilience after controlling for key socio-demographic covariates,” Dr. Yang says. “The findings suggest that experiencing both HIV-related stigma and SGM stigma may synergistically lead to poor psychosocial well-being among MSM in a more profound manner than experiencing only one type of stigma.”

The authors suggest that researchers and clinicians consider the patients' multiple stigmatized identities, develop effective intervention strategies, and improve the psychosocial well-being of MSM living with HIV in China and other cultural settings.