

# Stigma Indicators Monitoring Project

## Men who have sex with men

Stigma has a major impact on health outcomes for people living with blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible infections. The Australian Government Department of Health strategies for blood borne virus and sexually transmissible infections explicitly aim to “eliminate the negative impact of stigma, discrimination, and legal and human rights issues on people’s health.”

In 2020, a survey of men who have sex with men was conducted to investigate their experiences of stigma and discrimination. This followed on from a previous survey of men who have sex with men, conducted in 2018.

1,116 people completed the survey

81% gay identified

58% university educated

18% used pre-exposure prophylaxis

42% employed full-time

How often do you experience stigma or discrimination in relation to your sexual orientation?



In 2020, 74% of participants reported experiencing any stigma or discrimination related to their sexual orientation within the last 12 months, including 10% who indicated that this 'often' or 'always' occurred. Stigma and discrimination was reported less frequently in 2020 than in 2018, when 82% reported any past-year experience of stigma (including 14% who reported it 'often' or 'always' occurred). Additionally, 19% of HIV-negative participants in 2020 indicated that they had felt stigmatised in the last 12 months by other people assuming they had HIV.

In 2020, 30% of participants reported any negative treatment by health workers, including 2% who indicated this 'often' happened. Reports of negative treatment by health workers were no different between 2018 and 2020.

Reported experiences of stigma and discrimination decreased from 2018 to 2020, but still remain common among men who have sex with men. Stigma associated with HIV was also found to extend to HIV-negative men who have sex with men due to perceptions of their risk of HIV transmission. This project will continue to monitor stigma and discrimination experienced by men who have sex with men, though wide reaching interventions will be required if these experiences are to be significantly reduced within health care settings and the community more generally.

If the results presented here have upset you in any way, we encourage you to seek support from Lifeline (13 11 44).

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We would like to thank everyone who completed the survey.