



**THE PEOPLE
LIVING
WITH HIV
STIGMA
INDEX**

Findings from the PLHIV Stigma Index in Poland

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on behalf of SIEĆ PLUS the Polish Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS

**Workshop on People Living with HIV Stigma Index
May 26th, 2011. 14.00 - 18.00.
Nokia Concert Hall, Yellow room**

**HIV IN EUROPEAN REGION-
UNITY AND DIVERSITY
MAY 25-27**





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Всеукраїнська Мережа ЛЖВ
All-Ukrainian Network of PLWH



ЛЖВ Република Молдова
Network of People living with HIV
Republic of Moldova



TIMETABLE – Polish Implementation

- In 2009, the Round Table of non-governmental organizations acting for HIV positive people in Poland was convened.
- In 2010, the project was approved for financing by HIV in Europe and implementation in Poland
- The main data was collected by 25 interviewers from 12 NGOs between August - October 2010.

Stigma and discrimination in Poland

- In Poland there is officially no problem with HIV stigmatization. However, our organization has documented many individual cases of personal stigma situations.
- PLWHA are afraid of fighting for human rights because their families friends could find about their condition.

„In everyday life, at work people very rarely disclose the fact that they are infected”

Presenters Notes:

In Poland, little research about the quality of life of PLHIV has been made. In Poland people living with HIV/AIDS still have social problems. They are afraid to tell their family about their infection. Very often they lose their jobs after people find out about HIV. We still have situations where infected children have been thrown out from school. HIV people are sometimes unable to get into sanatoriums. People who contracted the disease after 2002 are mostly young people between 20-29. They are afraid of taking medications because someone could find about their condition.

Interviewer, Training workshop



Country sample size and characteristic

Number	% Female	Ages	% Urban	% Key Population*
504	39%	15 to 50+	72%	66%
				43% IDU, 20% MSM/G/L, 8% Prisoner



Household composition of PLHIV

- 75% of people living with HIV live at the level below national average wages 3033 PLN (1064 \$ per month).
- In the last month 10% of the respondents had insufficient amount of food .



Discrimination against

- 23% of the respondents were discriminated because of their sexual preferences
- 14% had their wife/ husband/ or partner, or any members of their household experienced discrimination as a result of their HIV-positive status in the last 12 months.



Reasons for discrimination

- PLHIV stress that lack of knowledge about HIV infection was the main reason of their discrimination.

In everyday life, at work people very rarely disclose the fact that they are infected

Interviewer, Training workshop



Example

50+ years man, living with HIV 15+ year

- In 2010 the respondent was at a hospital of Medical University in Warsaw at the nephrology ward. On the door the sign was fixed with annotation that this is isolation area and the nurses were afraid to take his blood for testing.

Presenters notes:

In Poland people still have hang-ups about HIV based on some particular myths related to the disease – prostitution, homosexuality, and drug users “Normal” people think that it is not their problem, but in fact they have little knowledge about HIV, so they can often be afraid when they find out about someone’s infection.



Health care discrimination

- Due to perceived – and sometimes actual stigma and discrimination:
- 20% of respondents (N=116) avoided going to a local clinic when they needed to, because of their HIV status,
- Almost 20% (N=98) of respondents had been denied health services, including dental care, because of their HIV status in the last 12 months.



Stigmatization and discrimination is evident especially in health care, both in small towns and big cities. At work. It is ever present, I sometimes have an impression that we moved back several year

Interviewer, Training workshop



Social stigma

- One in five respondents (N=123) had chose not to attend social gathering in the last 12 months because HIV.
- A similar number (N=126) isolated themselves from family and/or friends.
- Very often **43%** (N=217) of respondents had decided not to have (more) children because of their HIV status.

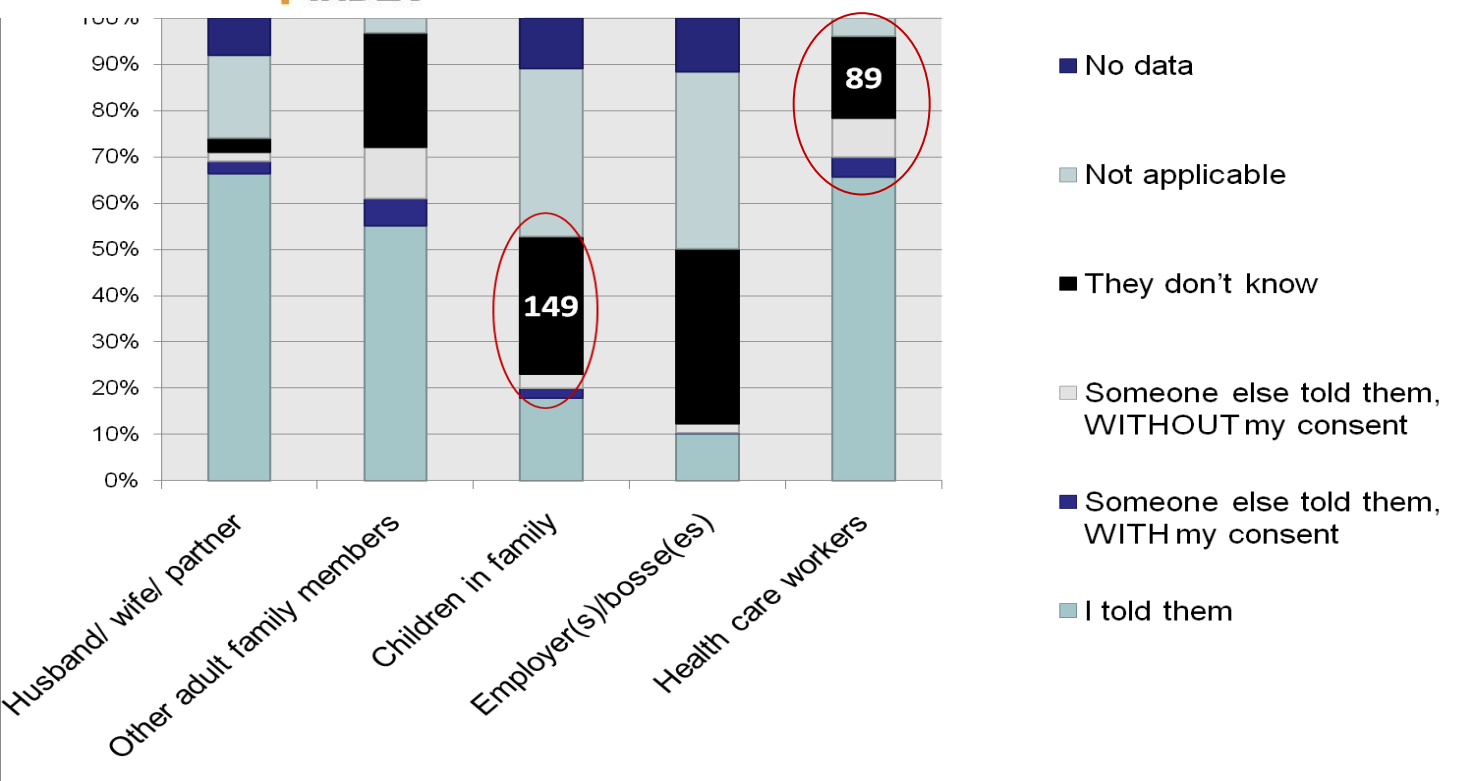
Presenters notes:

It is important to mention that in Poland there is access to treatment and a special protocol to protect a mother to child transmission



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For each of the following people or groups of people, please describe how they were first told about your HIV status?



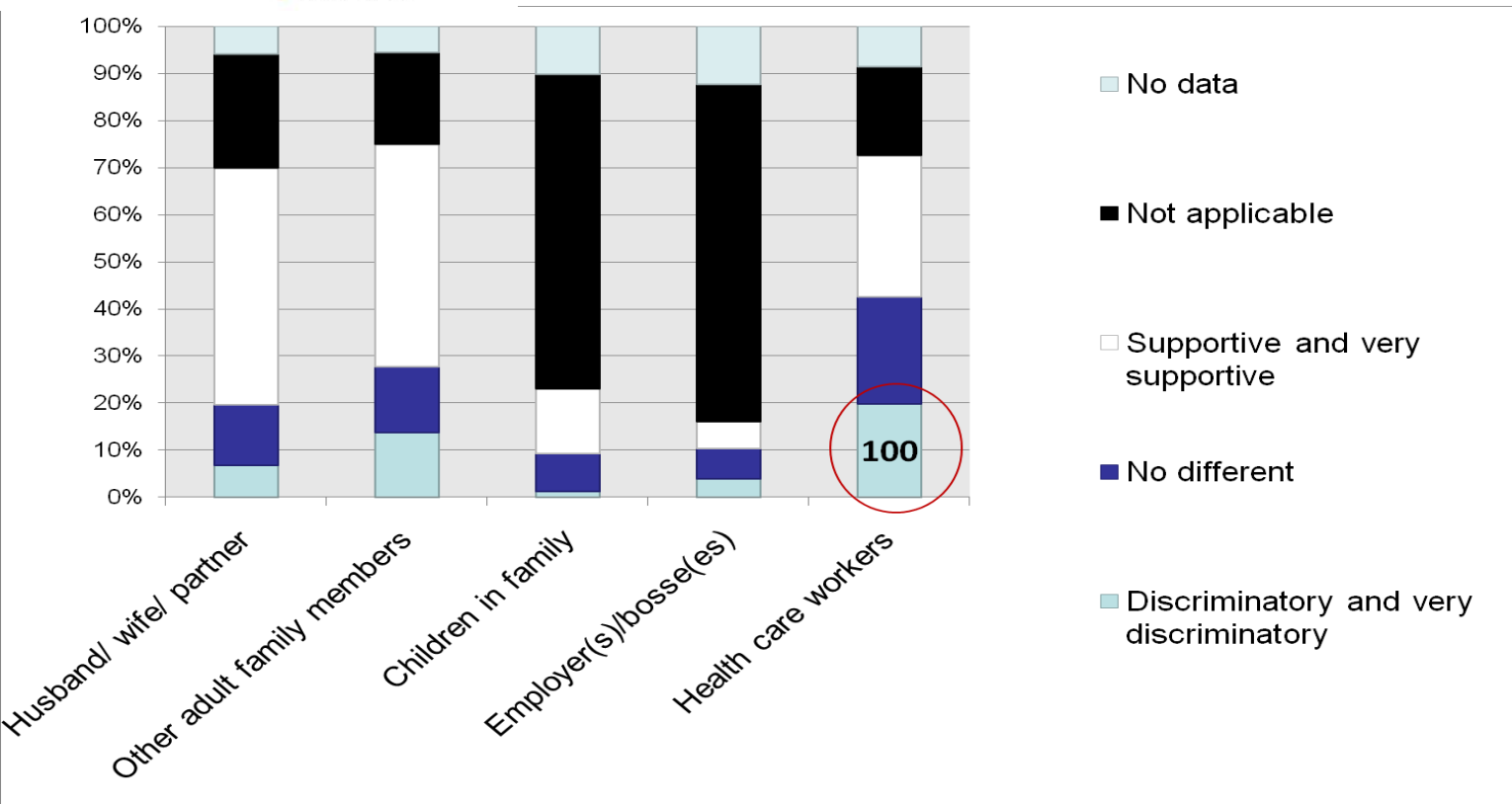
Presenters Notes:

This chart shows that 18% (N=89) of health care workers did not know the HIV status of respondents. 30% (N=149) of children in families also did not know about the HIV status. Out of all the respondents, the group informed the most about HIV status was husband/wife/ partner, which was more than 70%.



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How would you describe the reaction of these people (in general) when they first knew about your HIV status?



Presenters Notes:

20% (N=100) of respondent had very discriminatory or discriminatory reacting from health care workers when they first knew about their status. The second discriminatory group were other adult family members – 14% (N=71). 50% (N=253) of the husband/wife/ partner group reaction was supportive and very supportive. 30% (N=151) had a supportive and very supportive reaction from health care workers .

Next steps

- This report will be presented to the representatives of the state agencies and NGOs.
- I strongly hope that the results shall initiate some changes in the approach towards people living with HIV and that stigma and discrimination shall begin to diminish.



Acknowledgements

Most importantly, thanks are due to the more than 500 People living with HIV who shared their personal feelings, fears, and experiences.



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Thanks



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GNP+ GLOBAL NETWORK OF
PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

Technical support provided by GNP+
for the in country implementation of this research

Presenters Notes: I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable role of people living with HIV and their partners who participated in this study for their time and sharing their stories.

I trust that these findings will contribute to improving the health and quality of their lives and that of PLHIV in general.

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This is an initiative of four founding partners
More information can be accessed at:
www.stigmaindex.org





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Thank you

More details:

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Full report soon on the website:

www.netplus.org.pl

Fundacja



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