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**“Served the underserved-Improving HIV Response among Transgender Individuals in Kasur, Pakistan”**

**Your new abstract code is: EP0453**  
**Author: Mahnoor AKA Moon**



## **“Served the underserved-Improving HIV Response among Transgender Individuals in Kasur, Pakistan”**



### **Author's Profile**

**Author Name : Mahnoor Aka Moon**

Visionary Leader & Community Champion

As the Director of Khawaja Sira Society, Mahnoor is a trailblazing leader dedicated to promoting health, rights, and empowerment for marginalized communities. With a multifaceted background as a:

- Healthcare Professional: Committed to delivering high-quality healthcare services
- Development Practitioner: Skilled in designing and implementing impactful development programs
- Social Scientist: Applying evidence-based research to inform policy and practice
- Gender Rights Expert: Passionate about advancing gender equality and social justice

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### **Background:**

HIV remains a significant public health concern in Pakistan, particularly among key populations such as transgender individuals, transgender sex workers, and the Khawaja Sira (indigenous) community. These groups face stigma, exclusion from mainstream healthcare services, and discrimination, exacerbating their vulnerability to HIV.

### **Description:**

The Khawaja Sira Society conducted an assessment of HIV prevalence among 1,500 transgender individuals in Kasur city, analyzing data from 2023-2024. Using a mixed-methods approach, the assessment captured socio-demographic factors, sexual practices, HIV awareness, and healthcare access, barriers, experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the HIV situation among this vulnerable population and how to improve it.

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### **Lesson Learned:**

HIV Prevalence and Risk Factors: A significant HIV prevalence (14.7%) was found among participants, linked to high-risk behaviors (multiple sexual partners, unprotected sex), limited awareness about STIs (57.4% had never heard of STIs), and inadequate use of preventive measures (condom use was reported by only 27.5% of participants).

### **Barriers to Healthcare:**

Discrimination (71.2%), fear of disclosure (56.3%), and stigma (53.1%) were significant barriers to accessing healthcare services. Many participants reported experiencing harassment, denial of services, or substandard care due to their transgender status.

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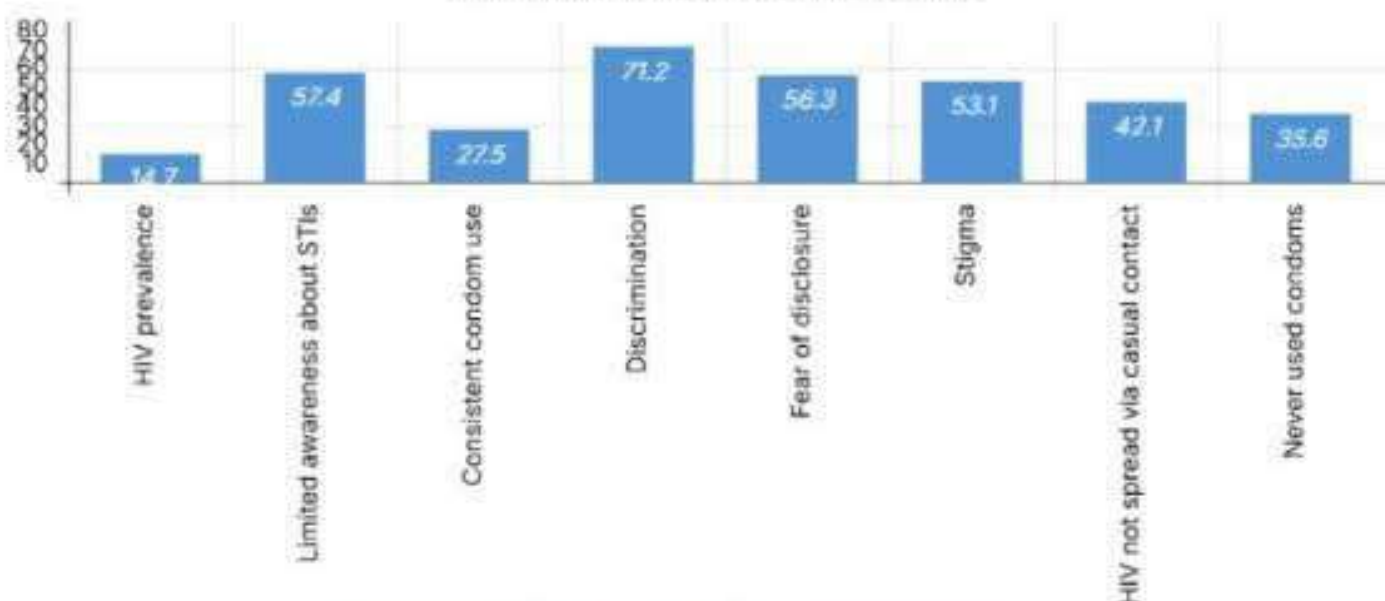


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### **Key Findings from the Assessment**

HIV Prevalence & Risk Behaviors



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### **Community Base Support:**

The involvement of the Khawaja Sira Society enhanced trust and participation, highlighting the importance of community-driven initiatives. Community-based organizations can play a vital role in promoting HIV awareness, providing stigma-free services, and advocating for the rights of transgender individuals.

Education Gaps: Limited knowledge about HIV transmission (42.1% believed HIV could be transmitted through casual contact) and prevention (35.6% reported never using condoms) underscored the need for well-developed educational programs targeting transgender individuals.

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### **Conclusion:**

Expand Access to Stigma-Free HIV Testing and Treatment: Services should not be limited to community-based organizations.

Implement Differentiated Services Delivery Models: To counter stigma and improve access to healthcare.

Develop Community-Led Awareness Campaigns and Educational Initiatives: To improve knowledge and reduce risky behaviors.

Strengthen Partnerships: Between healthcare providers and organizations like the Khawaja Sira Society to build trust and enhance outreach efforts.

Focused action is essential to improve health outcomes and reduce HIV prevalence among this vulnerable population. By implementing these recommendations, we can better address the HIV response among transgender individuals in Kasur, Pakistan.

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