

Epidemic of Inequality. Women's Rights and HIV/AIDS in Botswana and Swaziland. An Evidence-Based Report on the Effects of Gender Inequity, Stigma and Discrimination

Cambridge, Massachussets: Physicians for Human Rights, PHR, 2007. 203 p.

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Description:

Deeply entrenched gender inequities perpetuate the AIDS pandemic in Botswana and Swaziland, the two countries with the highest HIV prevalence in the world. The legal systems in both countries grant women lesser status than men, restricting property, inheritance and other rights. Social, economic and cultural practices create, enforce and perpetuate legalized gender inequalities and discrimination in all aspects of women's lives. The goal of the Botswana/Swaziland study was to understand the effects of women's social, economic and legal status on HIV/AIDS; assess current attitudes, policies, and practices; and propose pragmatic solutions to protect and promote the health and human rights of women and men in Botswana and Swaziland. To this end, qualitative and quantitative fieldwork was designed to: 1) identify and understand the barriers and facilitators to HIV prevention, testing and treatment in Botswana and Swaziland and how these may differ for women and men; 2) assess the attitudes of the general population towards PLWA in Botswana and Swaziland and describe how stigmatizing attitudes may relate to prevention and access to care; 3) describe the relationship between rights and prevention, testing and treatment; in particular, the ways that women's legal status and traditional customary practices relate to HIV risk for women and men; 4) formulate recommendations based on these findings and based on the opinions of Botswana and Swazi study participants who assessed the strengths and weaknesses of leadership in addressing the AIDS epidemic in each country.

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