

## Overview of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Levels of PLWHA

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**Abstract.** PLWHA (People Living With HIV/AIDS) is a community group that is stigmatized, and as a result, PLWHA feels ashamed and isolated. Stigma is one of the factors PLWHA experiences in depression, anxiety and stress. This study aims to describe The level of depression, anxiety and stress of PLWHA in Kupang City based on whether there is stigma received. This type of research is descriptive quantitative with 64 samples. The results showed that more PLWHA did not receive stigma than PLWHA who received stigma. This study shows that the stigma given by the environment affects the level of depression, anxiety and stress of PLWHA.

**Keywords:** *Stigma, Depression, Anxiety, Stress*

**Abstrak.** ODHA (Orang Dengan HIV/AIDS) merupakan salah satu kelompok masyarakat yang diberi stigma dan akibatnya ODHA merasa malu dan mengucilkan diri sendiri. Stigma merupakan salah satu faktor ODHA mengalami depresi, kecemasan dan stres. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat gambaran tingkat depresi, kecemasan dan stres pada ODHA di Kota Kupang berdasarkan ada tidaknya stigma yang diterima. Jenis penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kuantitatif dengan 64 sampel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lebih banyak ODHA yang tidak menerima stigma dibanding dengan ODHA yang menerima stigma. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa stigma yang diberikan oleh lingkungan berpengaruh terhadap tingkat depresi, kecemasan dan stres pada ODHA.

**Kata kunci:** *Stigma, Depresi, Kecemasan, Stres*

Article history:

Received 14 June 2022

Received in revised form 8 December 2022

Accepted 5 January 2023

Available online 7 January 2023

### Introduction

HIV/AIDS is still very dangerous because there is no medicine to treat this disease, and there is an increase in new cases every year. According to UNAIDS 2019, the highest HIV/AIDS cases in the world are in the African continent (25.7 million), Southeast Asia (3.8 million) and America (3.5 million) and the lowest cases

are in the West Pacific region with 1, 9 million cases (Kementrian Kesehatan RI, 2020).

Indonesia is one of the countries with the highest HIV/AIDS cases. The number of new cases in 2016 was 41,250 cases. In 2017 there was an increase in cases to 48,300 cases, and in 2018 there were 46,659 new cases. In 2019, HIV/AIDS cases increased to 50,282 (Kementrian Kesehatan RI, 2020). The number of cases in 2017 was 253 cases, then decreased in 2018 to 138 cases and increased slightly in 2019 with 167 cases (KPA Kota Kupang, 2020). There were 842 cases of HIV/AIDS in East Nusa Tenggara in 2018, and Kupang City is one of the cities with the highest HIV/AIDS cases in East Nusa Tenggara.

PLWHA (People With HIV/AIDS) is a term for someone infected with HIV/AIDS. Diseases accompanying AIDS include tuberculosis, diarrhoea, candidiasis, dermatitis, herpes simplex, herpes zoster, lymphadenopathy and persistent generalization (Kementrian Kesehatan RI, 2016). A person living with HIV is at risk for opportunistic infections, which can weaken someone.

Stigma is the labeling of a person or group of people who are considered bad. PLWHA is one of the groups of people who are stigmatized by their environment. This stigma arises because HIV/AIDS is dangerous, and people are afraid of being infected. The disease is associated with bad societal behaviour and moral or religious values. Because of this, many PLWHA is vulnerable to discrimination and social ostracism by the environment. This condition makes people living with HIV more vulnerable to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety and bad stress on themselves, difficulty controlling emotions and being away from social circles. Of course, this situation further worsened the patient's physical and mental health because social support plays a vital role in the healing process of the disease. Social support is needed to make patients more open to others as an antidote to the psychological stress of discrimination around them (Al Fatih, Hudzaifah, Tita Puspita Ningrum & Sumaira Shalma, 2021).

The number of cases of HIV/AIDS in Kupang City should be a concern for the community as PLWHA so that they can still have a better quality of life. However, in reality, there is still a sense of stigma out there. According to research by Didi, Akuila, Manurung, & Sir (2020) regarding knowledge and stigma in households infected with HIV and AIDS in Kupang City, the results for respondents with high stigma are 73%, meaning that PLWHA is still discriminated against.

### Method

This research is a type of quantitative research with a descriptive research design to get a picture or describe existing phenomena, both natural phenomena and man-made phenomena. The population in this study were all PLWHA in the city of Kupang, which amounted to 64 people. The sampling technique used is the saturated sample technique, so the number of samples is 64 people. The type of data used is primary data in the form of interviews using questionnaires and secondary data, namely documents from related agencies. The research instrument used was the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS 42) questionnaire to measure levels of depression, anxiety and stress and the Berger HIV Stigma Scale questionnaire to measure stigma in PLWHA.

### Result

Table 1.

*An overview of the stigma received by PLWHA in the City of Kupang in 2022*

No.	Stigma	Amount	%
1.	Receiving Stigma	16	25
2.	Not Accepting Stigma	48	75
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that PLWHA who do not receive stigma are more significant (75%) than PLWHA who receive stigma (25%).

Table 2.

*An overview of depression based on severity among PLWHA in Kupang City in 2022*

No.	Depression Severity	Amount	%
1.	Normal	32	50
2.	Light	10	19
3.	Currently	12	16

4.	Heavy	6	9
5.	Very heavy	4	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that PLWHA in Kupang City experienced the normal level of depression in as many as 32 people (50%), and the heaviest is at a burdensome level of 4 people (6%).

Table 3.

*An overview of anxiety based on severity in PLWHA in Kupang City in 2022*

No.	Anxiety Severity	Amount	%
1.	Normal	30	47
2.	Light	4	6
3.	Currently	14	22
4.	Heavy	10	16
5.	Very heavy	6	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 above shows that more PLWHA experiences normal levels of anxiety, as many as 30 people (47%) and the lowest experiencing mild anxiety, as many as four people (6%).

Table 4.

*An overview of stress by severity in PLWHA in Kupang City in 2022*

No.	Stress Severity	Amount	%
1.	Normal	40	62
2.	Light	10	16
3.	Currently	7	11
4.	Heavy	5	8
5.	Very heavy	2	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on table 4 above, the stress level in PLWHA is mainly experienced at normal levels by as many as 40 people (62%) and the lowest at very severe levels, namely by two people (3%).

Table 5.

*Comparison of depression rates among PLWHA who received stigma and did not receive stigma in Kupang City in 2022*

No.	Depression Severity	PLWHA With Stigma		PLWHA Not Stigma	
		N	%	N	%
1.	Normal	4	25	28	58

2.	Light	2	12	8	17
3.	Currently	4	25	8	17
4.	Heavy	3	19	3	6
5.	Very heavy	3	19	1	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 above shows the comparison of the level of depression in PLWHA who received stigma and did not receive stigma, namely at a normal level, more PLWHA experienced no stigma, namely 28 people (58%) compared to PLWHA with stigma, which was four people (25 %). Meanwhile, at the level of very severe depression, PLWHA with a stigma of 3 people (19%) were compared to PLWHA with no stigma, which is one person (2%).

Table 6.

*Comparison of anxiety levels in PLWHA who receive stigma and do not receive stigma in Kupang City in 2022*

No.	Anxiety Severity	PLWHA With Stigma		PLWHA Not Stigma	
		N	%	N	%
1.	Normal	4	25	26	55
2.	Light	1	6	3	6
3.	Currently	1	6	3	6
4.	Heavy	7	44	13	27
5.	Very heavy	3	19	3	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on table 6, the normal level of anxiety is more experienced in PLWHA who do not experience stigma as many as 26 people (55%) compared to PLWHA with a stigma which only four people (25%).

Table 7.

*Comparison of stress levels among PLWHA who received stigma and did not receive stigma in Kupang City in 2022*

No.	Stress Severity	PLWHA With Stigma		PLWHA Not Stigma	
		N	%	N	%
1.	Normal	5	31	35	73
2.	Light	5	31	5	10
3.	Currently	3	19	4	8
4.	Heavy	2	13	3	6
5.	Very heavy	1	6	1	3

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<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100</b>
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Based on table 7, the comparison of stress levels in PLWHA who received stigma and did not receive stigma, namely at normal levels or did not experience stress, was more experienced by PLWHA who did not get stigmatized as many as 35 people (73%) compared to PLWHA with a stigma which was only five people (31%). At a very heavy stress level, PLWHA with stigma only one person (6%) and PLWHA with no stigma is one person (3%).

## **Discussion**

### **Levels of Depression, Anxiety and Stress in PLWHA who Receive Stigma**

Stigma is a stereotype or negative sign given by the environment to something or someone considered flawed, dangerous and less than others. Stigma against PLWHA is an insult or bad prejudice against people with AIDS. It can hinder socialization activities or treatment of PLWHA themselves because they are ostracized from their environment and humiliated. The results of this study indicate that there are more PLWHA who do not receive stigma, namely 48 people (75%), compared to PLWHA who receive stigma, as many as 16 people (25%).

The level of depression in PLWHA who received stigma in Kupang City was more than normal and moderate depression in as many as four people (25%). This study's results align with research conducted by Widayati et al. (2016), which explains that more PLWHA experiences normal depression (72.7%). The level of anxiety in PLWHA who received stigma in Kupang City was more experiencing severe anxiety, as many as seven people (44%). This study is in line with research conducted by Bagus et al. (2019) that PLWHA has a severe level of anxiety, namely as many as 18 respondents (93.3%). Nevertheless, this study is not in line with Ilmi's (2020) research, which states that most respondents have normal anxiety levels, as many as 39 respondents (43.3%). The stress level for PLWHA who received stigma in Kupang City was normal and moderate for as many as five people (31%). This

study is in line with Ilmi's (2020) research, which states that most PLWHA has normal stress levels, namely 39 respondents (43.3%).

PLWHA is stigmatized by society because of the perception of society that people think PLWHA is a form of deviant behavior. Examples of people's treatment of PLWHA include staying away and not wanting to make physical contact, so they stop communicating with them. Stigma hinders the lives of PLWHA from carrying out social activities, so PLWHA tend to close themselves off and not interact with family, friends and relatives. As a result of this stigma, PLWHA can experience stress, anxiety and depression. The stress and depression experienced by PLWHA can impact their physical condition of PLWHA. People living with HIV who experience stress or depression will cause cortisol levels in the blood to increase so that cellular and humoral immune responses are inhibited. Apoptosis does not occur and causes the virus to proliferate and spread quickly. Excessive stress in PLWHA plays an essential role in the development of the disease, which can accelerate the occurrence of viral replicas and suppress the client's response so that it can shorten the HIV asymptomatic period and accelerate the course of the disease (Pujati & Narayani, 2021).

#### **Levels of Depression, Anxiety and Stress in PLWHA who do not Receive Stigma**

In this study, the level of depression in PLWHA who did not receive stigma was at a normal level, as many as 28 people (58%) and in line with research conducted by Fatmawati (2018) where more PLWHA experienced normal depression. The level of anxiety in PLWHA who did not receive stigma was higher than the normal level in as many as 26 respondents (54%), and the stress level in PLWHA who did not receive the stigma was at the normal level in as many as 35 people (73%). From this study, it can be concluded that the absence of stigma or high family support, such as motivating them to constantly seek treatment, taking them to health services, and always being near and communicating with them, means the lower the level of depression in PLWHA.

People living with HIV need social support because, with the support from their environment, people living with HIV feel valued, loved and motivated to continue living a good life. Good social support makes people living with HIV feel part of the environment. Stigma or discrimination experienced by PLWHA can affect psychological problems and quality of life. The less stigma, the better the quality of life for those infected. PLWHA can live without environmental pressures and are well-placed to receive HIV treatment. PLWHA who are treated with ARV can extend their life expectancy of PLWHA because ARV helps suppress the virus that exists in PLWHA and maintain a healthy body so that PLWHA looks healthy and can live their daily lives.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of this study, it was found that more PLWHA did not receive stigma than PLWHA who received stigma. The description of depression of PLWHAs in the city of Kupang is that more people experience normal levels of experience more normal levels of anxiety and more experience normal stress.

### *Suggestion*

Related agencies such as the AIDS Commission can control every PLWHA in Kupang City so that they continue to receive good social and health support and perform treatment without any pressure from their environment. The Kupang City Health Office is recommended to provide education or socialization to the community about the importance of social support for PLWHA and reducing stigma in the community. This can be started by distributing brochures in areas with the most cases of HIV/AIDS, followed by placing advertisements on radio or television about HIV/AIDS prevention and what can and cannot be done for PLWHA so that people know not to give stigma anymore.

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