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## Attitudes toward people with HIV/AIDS among medical practitioners and nonmedical specialists in Ukraine

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**INTRODUCTION:** AIDS is the disease that has been stigmatized since its development; stigmatization of people living with HIV is an important barrier to using HIV testing and treatment. It is well known, that stigma is associated with mental disorders including depression and anxiety. Ukraine is a country with one of the highest numbers of annual HIV infection cases.

**GOALS:** The goal of this study was to evaluate medical practitioners' (surgeons, psychiatrists, therapists and students) and nonmedical specialists' attitude toward people with HIV/AIDS.

**METHODS:** A total of 180 individuals participated in the study. Acceptance of people who have AIDS or are infected with HIV was assessed with the help of the "Attitudes toward people with HIV or AIDS". Total scores range from 50 to 10, higher scores indicate high acceptance of persons with HIV/AIDS.

**RESULTS:** Younger participants reported higher acceptance of persons with HIV or AIDS ( $p < .05$ ). Females and males did not differ in terms of attitudes toward people living with HIV/AIDS ( $p > .05$ ). Medical practitioners showed greater total score, compare to nonmedical specialists ( $38.0 \pm 6.0$  vs.  $34.0 \pm 5.5$ , respectively,  $p < .05$ ). A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of medical specialty on levels of positive attitudes toward people with HIV or AIDS. The actual difference in mean

scores between the 4 groups was moderate (.06). Students and psychiatrists reported more positive attitudes (higher acceptance) toward people with HIV and AIDS, but analyses showed, that there was no statistically significant difference at the level in total score for the groups.

**CONCLUSION:** In this study we evaluated the level of attitudes toward people with HIV or AIDS in Ukraine. Young age and medical education were significantly associated with the positive attitudes toward people with HIV and AIDS. Our findings are important for the programs reducing the stigma and discrimination that should be addressed to the wide layers of the society.

**KEY WORDS:** HIV/AIDS; attitude; medical specialists; Ukraine

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## Отношение медицинских специалистов и немедицинских работников к ВИЧ-инфицированным пациентам в Украине

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