

Exploring HIV-related stigma among Sub-Saharan African migrants in Flanders

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- **Background:** Sub-Saharan African migrants are 2nd group affected by HIV in Belgium
- **Methods:** A qualitative study (20 in-depth interviews) guided by the HIV stigma framework (Earnshaw et al., 2009) was conducted among SAM communities in Provinces of Antwerp, East-Flanders and Vlaams Brabant at 4 sites to explore HIV- related stigma, the effects of stigma, both on SAM communities and SAM living with HIV, in order to identify which interventions can reduce stigma.
- **Conclusion**
 - High levels of stigma exist within the SAM community in Belgium
 - Main driver of stigma include the lack of education on HIV and fear of HIV
 - Stigma impacts on PLHIV's social life, psychological well-being and potentially the rise in HIV infections
- **Proposed effective interventions for stigma reduction:**
 - Ongoing awareness with participation of PLHIV;
 - Targeting the group who held particularly high stigmatizing attitudes;
 - Prioritizing which stigma to be reduced and measuring the results
 - Access to free and effective medication