

# Awareness About HIV Prevention and Control Act Among People Living with HIV in Northwestern Tanzania

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## Background

In Tanzania, the HIV/AIDS control and prevention Act 2008 (Act 28; section IV: 21 page 11) about HIV status disclosure states that: "Any person who knows being infected with HIV after being tested shall; Immediately inform his/her spouse or sexual partner of the fact and take all reasonable measures and precautions to prevent the transmission of HIV to others." The study aimed to explore whether people understand that disclosure of HIV status to sexual partners is a human right obligation.

## Methods

A descriptive qualitative study was nested in an ongoing cohort study in northwestern Tanzania. The sub-study involved people are living with HIV from the primary cohort. Respondents were purposively selected to take part in six focus group discussions and thirty in-depth interviews. Additionally, seven key Informant interviews were conducted with lawyers and advocates. Data were transcribed, translated, coded, and analyzed by thematic content analysis supported by NVIVO software.

## Results

Majorities (> 90%) were not aware and have never heard about the existence of the HIV prevention and control act or availability of legal assistance on HIV status non-disclosure to the sexual partner. Respondents felt that non-disclosure is a crime similar to killing someone; therefore, the partner who is not being honest to his/her partner has to be prosecuted. In cases where these incidences happened, the matters were solved at the family level, couples were not ready to follow legal procedures due to fear of stigma, so no legal actions were taken.

## Conclusion

The study found that awareness and understanding of HIV prevention and control activities with regards to HIV status disclosure are very minimal among the people living with HIV. More efforts are needed to overcome stigma and fears attached to disclosure, like improved HIV post-testing counseling, strengthening assisted partner notification services, and community education

