

# Experiences of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Jahrom, Southern Iran: A Phenomenological Study

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**Background:** HIV/AIDS has remained a public health issue, especially in developing countries. The contributing factors to HIV/AIDS include poor access to medical care, fear, shame because of stigmatization, and lack of social support resulting in the isolation of people who share their status. **Objectives:** Taking a phenomenological descriptive approach, this qualitative study investigated the experiences of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Jahrom, Southern Iran. **Patients and Methods:** The data were collected through in-depth and semi-structured interviews (face to face) with 21 (10 males and 11 females) participants who were referred to the Jahrom Counseling Center for Behavioral Diseases. They were selected by the purposive sampling method according to theoretical saturation. Data were analyzed using the Diekelmann method. **Results:** Analysis of the interview data and notes resulted in the four key themes: (I) emotional and psychological disturbances with three sub-themes: fear, depression, and feeling victimized; (II) stigma with three subthemes, including fear of being exposed, false judgment, and discrimination; (III) supportive environment with two sub-themes of family and social support; (IV) patients' perspective of the future with three sub-themes, including hopelessness for the future, the future importance of children and hope for the future, and find a cure. **Conclusions:** Developing educational programs for the public can greatly increase public awareness of HIV, change attitudes and beliefs about HIV, and modify the behavior of others in dealing with PLHIV. This change of attitude creates social support and facilitates the acceptance of the infection for PLHIV.

**Keywords:** Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, Qualitative Research, Stigmatization, Interview, Iran