

## Implementation of HIV diagnostic testing policy in India: a study of policy-practice links in the urban formal medical sector

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Physician-advised HIV testing is the commonest setting for named HIV testing in India, which has the second largest population of HIV positive individuals in the world. There is evidence that doctors in India do not adhere to recommended national policy guidelines in advising HIV tests, including taking specific informed consent, pre-and post-test counselling, re-confirming test results before disclosure, maintaining confidentiality of test results, and ensuring continued care and support. This research study uses a policy analysis approach to examine these gaps in implementation of HIV testing policies. Different groups of actors involved in implementation: policy-planners, doctors, and intermediary agencies have differing interpretations of the implementation process. This study explicates each of these perspectives in order to understand the nature of the implementation gaps, and identify ways of bridging the gaps. The study was based in public and private hospitals and clinics, and in offices of policy-planners and implementing agencies, in Delhi, the capital city of India. A combination of qualitative methods was used including interviews of doctors, key actors of the health system and expert key informants; and analysis of policy documents. Policy mapping including backward and forward mapping techniques will be used, and the “framework approach” for policy research will be used to analyze the data. It is expected that the findings of this study will contribute to our understanding of the implementation of HIV/AIDS policies, and of the governance of medical behaviour, in India and globally.

Fieldwork has been completed comprising 75 in-depth interviews with physicians, programme officials, civil society stakeholders, and policymakers. Analysis of the data is under way toward writing up a PhD thesis, and two papers are being prepared for publication.

lobally.

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