

# Doblemente tachada: A mixed methods assessment of how intersectional stigma affects HIV prevention among Indigenous gay and bisexual men in Guatemala

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## BACKGROUND

44% of Guatemalans identify as Indigenous.<sup>1</sup>

Compared to non-Indigenous counterparts, they are more likely to <sup>2</sup>:

- Live in extreme poverty
- Have lower rates of educational attainment
- Experience poor health outcomes

Indigenous gay and bisexual men (GBM) likely experience **intersectional stigma**, when various forms of oppression overlap to negatively affect those with multiple marginalized identities <sup>3</sup>.

We sought to assess how intersectional stigma impacts HIV prevention for Indigenous GBM in Guatemala.

## METHODS

Between April 2022 and April 2024, we conducted an exploratory sequential mixed methods study and integrated data from in-depth qualitative interviews with Indigenous GBM (n=23) and a cross-sectional survey with Indigenous GBM (n=395) in Western Guatemala.

For qualitative data, we coded thematically and conducted narrative analysis to identify the most salient themes.

For quantitative data, we conducted descriptive statistics to report the frequency and proportion of stigma and HIV prevention outcomes.

We then integrated data and used the quantitative data to provide context to the themes that emerged from the qualitative data.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## REFERENCES

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## RESULTS

### Experiences of Intersectional Stigma

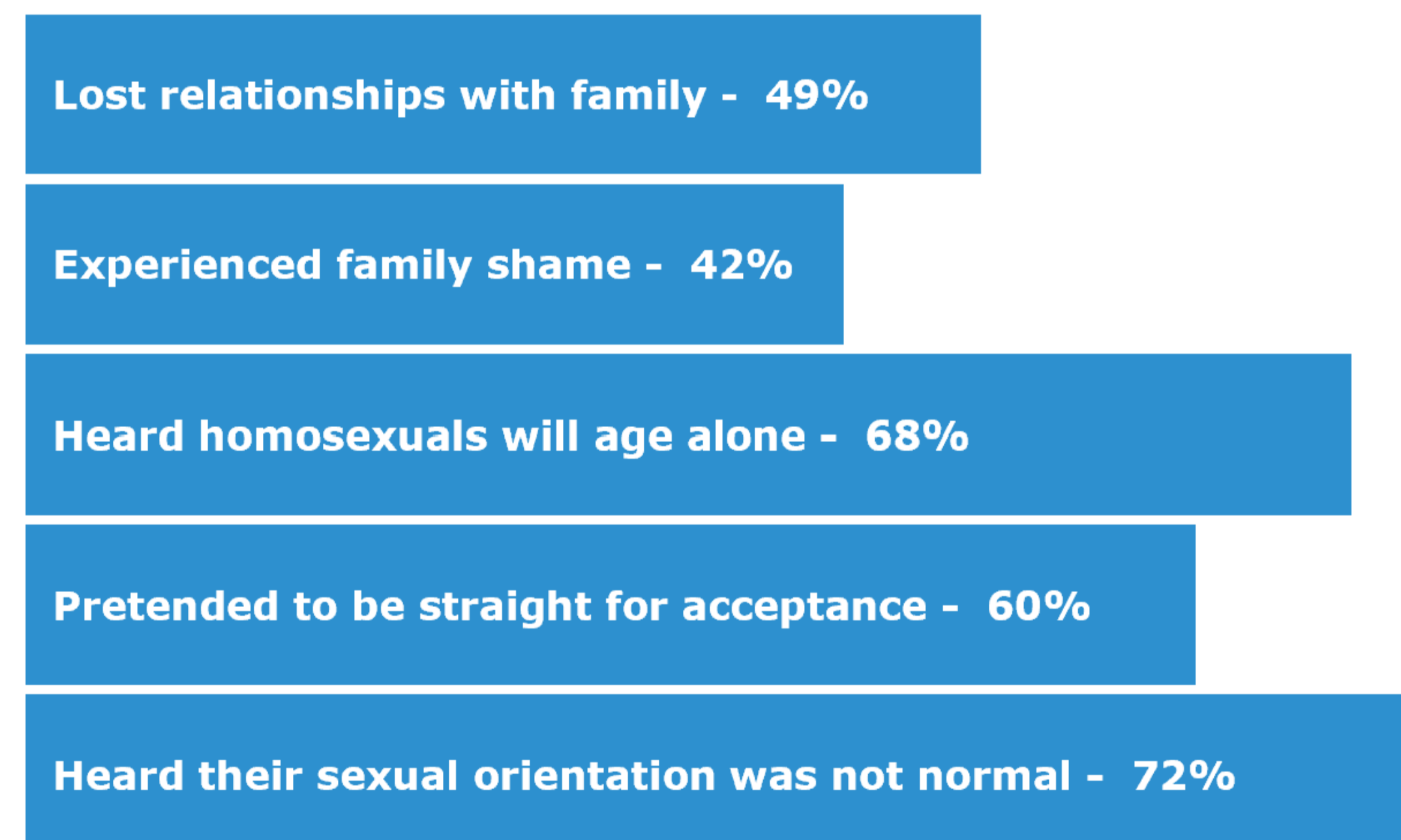
Indigenous GBM experience intersectional stigma based on multiple marginalized identities, primarily their Indigenous and sexual identities, but also based on gender expression, level of education, and if they were from a rural setting. Many participants recognized the unique experiences of Indigenous GBM in terms of enacted and perceived stigma and were quick to point out that this group experiences stigma differently compared to heterosexual Indigenous Guatemalans and non-Indigenous LGBTI Guatemalans. As one participant explained, "...if we know that an Indigenous person is labelled for being Indigenous, they're doubly labelled [*doblemente tachada*] for being gay".

### Sexual Orientation Stigma

While participants reported that stigma based on sexual orientation (SO) occurred in all settings in Guatemala and from many different sectors of society, many perceived this stigma to be more severe for Indigenous GBM when it originated from members of the rural Indigenous communities in which they lived.

...it's not easy to openly identify as a gay kid, because our culture tells us that this is witchcraft and that it's disrespectful to our ancestors, or at least this is what our elders say, and so you can be lynched, even burned alive, for having this sexual orientation.

Due to their sexuality, participants reported that in the past 12 months that they:



### Impact on HIV Prevention

Intersectional stigma had a direct impact on the mental and physical health of Indigenous GBM, but also impacted social and structural determinants of health, including access to education, stable employment, and quality healthcare. Many participants described avoiding HIV prevention services in state-run clinics for fear of mistreatment for being gay/bisexual and in LGBTQ-organizations for fear of mistreatment due to Indigenous identity. Compared to GBM in Guatemala City, Indigenous GBM in Western Guatemala are less aware of PrEP and fewer consider it an acceptable form of HIV prevention.

## CONCLUSIONS

To increase Indigenous GBM engagement in HIV prevention services, multicomponent interventions are needed to mitigate the effects of intersectional stigma, including on structural determinants of health, while also identifying innovative strategies for addressing the root causes of homophobia and racism in Guatemala.

They believe that an Indigenous person should be inferior, you know? They have an inferior economic category, an inferior academic category, and if you add stigma and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, then you realize that there's another sphere [of stigma] that affects these populations.

### Indigenous Identity Stigma

Indigenous GBM are stigmatized for their ethnicity, which for many in Guatemalan society carries additional assumptions that they are from a lower social class, less educated, and from a rural community. Stigma for being Indigenous was most often reported in settings where Ladinos/Mestizos (non-Indigenous Guatemalans) were the majority, as is the case in Guatemala City or other urban centers, or where they held leadership positions, including in hospitals, schools, and other government institutions.

...sometimes they might not realize you're from the [LGBTQ] community, but they discriminate against you for being Indigenous...for me, using a moral [handbag] in my region is to be proud of your identity, because this is who I am, I'm from the Q'eqchi' community...in Guatemala City is where there's more racism and discrimination, because if you don't speak [Spanish] well, if you're dark skinned, things are just harder for you.

### Measure of Indigenous Racism Experiences (MIRE):

