## AIDS, Stigma and Gender: Health Consequences in Urban

India

PI: Maria L. Ekstrand PhD

Co-Is: Shalini Bharat PhD, Gregory Herek PhD, Jayashree

Ramakrishna PhD, V Ravi MD, Prabha Chandra MD

**Project Staff:** Thomas Osmand MPH, Jason Barry, Sonal Shukla, Neha Kachroo, Hamsa Krishna, Kathryn Steuerman, Anitha S, Nageshappa VS, Kirutheka, Chidanand Swamy, Gloria, Nathali D'Silva, Asmita Naik, Shashikant Sakat, Pooja Sanghvi, Vanita Bagde, Prerana

Bagde

## **Project Description**

This study is a collaboration between UCSF, UC Davis, the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore and the TATA Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. The field sites are located in Bangalore and Mumbai, two large Indian cities situated in high HIV prevalence states.



The study is designed to:

- Examine the nature, extent, and context of AIDS stigma and discrimination by gender, at multiple
  levels, among people coming into contact with urban health care systems, including: people living
  with HIV/AIDS, healthcare staff and the general population of patients seeking healthcare in
  outpatient settings.
- Measure the health-relevant consequences of AIDS stigma and discrimination among both perpetrators and targets of stigma. These include the influence of stigma on HIV testing, on disclosure, on treatment seeking, and on willingness to provide care and treatment.
- Develop a culturally-specific theoretical understanding of AIDS stigma and health in urban India as
  well as measures of AIDS stigma that can be used to evaluate future stigma reduction policies and
  programs in healthcare and community settings among victims and perpetrators.
- Develop empirically-based programs and policy recommendations to reduce AIDS-related stigma and discrimination in urban Indian healthcare settings and to disseminate these.

## Interesting Findings

- Avoiding disclosure of HIV status leads to greater social isolation, poorer mental health, and continuing endorsement of HIV stigmatizing attitudes among HIV+ individuals in Southern India.
- By contrast, disclosure avoidance does not lead to fewer enactments of stigma, nor does it shield one from hearing stories about discrimination against others with HIV.
- Programs are urgently needed to support people living with HIV/AIDS in identifying and disclosing their infection to sympathetic friends and family.

Project End Date: May 2009