

**Title : Modeling the impact of Stigma on Depression and sexual risk behavior of MSM and Tg/Hijras in India: Implications for HIV and Sexual Health Programmes**

This study aims to validate a conceptual model of the impact of stigma on depression and sexual risk behaviours of men who have sex with men (MSM) and Hijras/transgender (TG) women in India. We use a *sequential mixed methods explanatory design: Quantitative phase* (n=300 MSM/300 TG)—a multi-site survey to assess the relationship between HIV-related, sexual and transgender identity-related stigma on depression and sexual risk behaviours, using structural equation modeling to validate theoretical predictions and assess mediating effects of social support and resilient coping; *Qualitative phase* (n=40)—in-depth interviews with ‘sequential purposive sampling’ to recruit confirming and disconfirming cases to further explain pathways, contexts, and mechanisms through which stigma may be associated with depression and sexual risk behaviours. Findings will inform mental health interventions and social/structural interventions to reduce stigma and discrimination to be incorporated into existing HIV prevention and sexual health interventions among MSM and Hijras/transwomen in India.