

# SELF-EFFICACY IN THE HIV/AIDS PREVENTIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG LESBIANS: A PHENOMENOLOGY STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** HIV/AIDS remains a major global public health problem. Millions of people die every year due to HIV/AIDS. However, only 54% of people with HIV/AIDS who are aware of their status. The HIV/AIDS epidemic does not only affect the affected individuals but also households and the society as a whole. The incidence of HIV/AIDS among lesbians is still low, so that they are considered as a low-risk group. Nevertheless it is interesting to have an understanding on how this specific group behaves with respect to HIV/AIDS infection. This study aimed to assess the self-efficacy concept in the HIV/AIDS preventive behavior among lesbians in Surakarta.

**Subjects and Method:** A qualitative study was conducted at Talita Kum Comunity, Surakarta, with phenomenology approach. The key informants were Head of Talita Kum lesbian community, their members, health workers, social workers from Non-Government Organization, and a representative from Regional Commission on AIDS Prevention (KPAD) in Surakarta. The study theme was self-efficacy concept in the HIV/AIDS preventive behavior. The data were collected by in-depth interview, observation, and document review. The data were analyzed by Miles and Huberman method.

**Results:** Lesbians at Talita Kum community had considerably strong self-efficacy with positive expectation and strong outcome expectancy. Based on Bandura's four sources of efficacy beliefs, i.e. mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, emotional and physiological states, we found that mastery experience and verbal persuasion were the strongest factors that increased self-efficacy among lesbians at Talita Kum Community. However, they were not capitalizing this self-efficacy into HIV/AIDS preventive behavior such as doing medical check-up and health screening. Some factors might have hampered the realization of the expected preventive behavior, including violence and verbal abuse, desire for anonymity, and "zero risk" perception of HIV/AIDS.

**Conclusion:** Self-efficacy is strong among lesbians at Talita Kum community, but it does not necessarily translate into actual HIV/AIDS preventive behavior. There is a need to provide health promotion intervention to this community so as to encourage them to practice HIV/AIDS preventive behavior.

**Keywords:** lesbian, self-efficacy, preventive behavior, HIV/AIDS.

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