

HIV-positive women are less likely to find work than men affected by the virus

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This statistical analysis will determine the likelihood of an HIV-positive individual having a job in Spain. Credit: SINC

Juan Oliva, a researcher at the University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM) explores the relationship between the employment status of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)-positive individuals and socioeconomic characteristics in Spain between 2001 and 2004. The study finds that gender is a "statistically significant" variable when predicting employment status.

"The probability of HIV-positive individuals participating in the [labour market](#) varies significantly depending on gender, type of transmission, [health](#) and level of education, Juan Oliva, main author of the study and a researcher at the UCLM told SINC.

This [statistical analysis](#), the conclusions of which have been published recently in the journal entitled *Health Economics*, will determine the likelihood of an HIV-positive individual having a job in Spain.

"Gender is a statistically significant variable when predicting employment status. In this sense, women are 13.4% less likely than men to be in employment, Oliva states.

"The psychological factor is also a fundamental variable. People who need psychological treatment to overcome the impact of discovering they are infected see their chances of employment diminish," the expert says. According to the study, this probability decreases by 14% when people require this type of treatment.

The results also suggest when the infection is transmitted through the use of injectable drugs, individuals have a significantly lower probability of being employed than people who are infected in other ways.

The strength of the immune system is another highly significant variable. "The results indicate that a person with a strong immune system is 25% more likely to be employed," the research states. However, patients recently diagnosed HIV-positive (in the 12 months prior to the survey) were 11.2% more likely to work than patients who were diagnosed earlier.

Importance of Surveys

The research is based on data from the Hospital Survey of HIV-positive/AIDS Patients that has been conducted periodically since 1996 and was made available by the Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Policy in order to perform the study. Since 2001, this survey has included a question about the employment status of HIV-positive individuals.

"We gathered data from that year until 2004 from 3,376 individuals aged between 16 (the minimum working age in Spain) and 64 (the legal age of retirement is 65)", the researcher explains.

"Policies to improve the employment status and wellbeing of HIV-positive people should not be confined to labour market participation or health. Long term measures aimed at supporting HIV-positive individuals should be multidisciplinary and include health, labour and social aspects," Oliva concludes.

According to the latest hospital survey, 48.3% of HIV-positive individuals in Spain were in employment in 2009.

More information: Juan Oliva, 'Labour participation of people living with HIV/AIDS in Spain', HEALTH ECONOMICS LETTERS 19: 491-500, publicado on-line el 15 de abril de 2009.
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