

**ETHNIC MIGRANT WORKERS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS:  
STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION IN URBAN AREAS OF  
KUNMING, YUNNAN PROVINCE, CHINA**



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**ABSTRACT**

This Yi ethnic rural migrant workers living with HIV/AIDS suffer a “double” stigma and discrimination in the Chinese social cultural context. This thesis reports an exploratory qualitative research with in-depth interviews of 17 Yi ethnic migrant workers living with HIV/AIDS suffering experience of stigma and discrimination in urban areas.

From macro level to micro level, this thesis demonstrates Yi migrant workers living with HIV/AIDS suffer stigma and discrimination through their daily lives: The state has separated people into two groups: “normal people” and “people living with HIV/AIDS”; Also, “unlucky”, “bad and dirty” and “sin” words were used to describe them under cultural, religious, media and ideological system; During their therapy, they were looked upon as a “contagious” and “dangerous” group by hospitals; Many places of employment or workplaces have some latent rules against HIV/AIDS and migrants for their “horrible disease” and their ambiguous Yi migrant identities; Their children are also “labeled” “stealers” and “rude students” by their schoolmates and teachers; They are “separated” for eating, sleeping and living among their partners, families, and communities for their “infection disease” and so on. Under the social cultural context, self stigma and discrimination causes the most suffering. They withdraw from contact with society, feeling “shameful”, “dirty” and “guilty”, seeing themselves as “deformed” and “contagious” etc, which causes them to lose their basic ability and right to have a normal daily life.

Two management strategies were found disclosing or not disclosing their HIV/AIDS infection identities. To avoid being stigmatized and discriminated against, they hide their HIV/AIDS positive status from their workplaces, children’s schools, clinics, friends and family members and limit physical contact with their children. For seeking support, some of them disclosed their status to members of families, friends and workplaces, agencies and so on.

**KEY WORDS:** HIV/AIDS/ YI ETHNICITY/ MIGRANT WORKERS/ STIGMA  
DISCRIMINATION/ EXPERIENCE/ KUNMING/YUNNAN/  
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