Making Gay A Crime Harms HIV Fight

November 10, 2014 By Benjamin Ryan

Laws that criminalize homosexuality hamper access to both HIV prevention and care services for men who have sex with men (MSM) according to three reports presented at the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia. In one study that surveyed over 4,000 MSM around the world in 2012, nearly a quarter of sub-Saharan men reported having been arrested or convicted for homo-sexuality-related charges, along with 10 percent of Latin American men, 15 percent of Caribbean men, 13 percent of those in the Middle East and North Africa and 18 percent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

When compared with the rest of the men in the survey, those who had been arrested or convicted for homosexuality-related charges had a respective 24 percent and 21 percent reduced likelihood of having access to condoms and HIV testing, and a respective 30 percent and 23 percent reduced likelihood of receiving medical care and mental health services. A conviction or arrest slashed in half the chance of accessing HIV treatment among those who were living with the virus.

Michaela Clayton, director of the AIDS & Rights Alliance for Southern Africa, who operates out of Windhoek, Namibia, said such findings aren't surprising to her, given the severity and widespread nature of Southern Africa's homophobia. One of her organization's most immediate goals is to try to change minds about homosexuality from the ground up.

"I think we're gaining more ground in changing public perception than we are at getting policy makers to change their minds," she says.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/crimanlizing-homosexuality-26410-8657