



Sodomy Laws Bad for HIV

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While sodomy is no longer a crime anywhere in the United States, states where such prohibitive laws remained in place until four years ago saw the fewest reductions in AIDS cases between 1995 and 2003, according to a study presented at the 2007 National HIV Prevention Conference in Atlanta.

Anatole Menon-Johannson, PhD, of the Harvard School of Public Health, and his colleagues analyzed AIDS cases in each of the 50 states reported between 1995 and 2003. They divided each state into two groups: those that did and didn't have sodomy laws on the books during this time.

Dr. Menon-Johannson's team reported that while most states saw a drop in AIDS cases during this period, AIDS incidence reductions in states with sodomy laws were less pronounced—on the order of 1.55 percent below the average in other states.

Though the U.S. Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws as unconstitutional in 2003, the U.S. Military continues to punish those convicted of sodomy while in the military. Menon-Johannson theorized that the sodomy laws were evidence of societal discrimination against gays and lesbians and pointed to several studies where homophobia has been linked to an increased risk of becoming infected with HIV.

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