

## Self – Concept among HIV and Non - HIV Patients: A Study with Particular Reference to Bihar State, India

Sushama Bharti\*

PhD Scholar, University Department of Psychology, L. N. Mithila University, Kameshwaranagar, Darbhanga, Bihar 846004, India

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\*Corresponding author: Sushama Bharti

### Abstract

### Original Research Article

Self – concept is distinguishable from self awareness, which refers to the extent to which self- knowledge is defined, consistent, and currently applicable to one’s attitudes and dispositions. Therefore, the present study was aimed at studying the self – concept among HIV and Non – HIV normal patients with particular reference to Bihar state. To measure the differences in self – concept among HIV and Non – HIV normal patients, total sample (N=80) was selected from Darbhanga Medical College and Hospitals – a well known hospital of Northern India, which comprises HIV patients (n=40) and Non – HIV normal patients (n=40). Total respondents’ age were ranged between 26 to 52 years of age. Having collected the information on the phenomenon, the data were tabulated for giving statistical treatment. Obtained results indicated significant difference in terms of their perceived self - concept between the group of HIV infected and Non – HIV normal patients especially from where the present sample has been drawn. It is important to be mentioned here that the self- concept among non HIV normal patients was found significantly high in comparison to the self – concept of HIV infected respondents. Moreover, out of six dimensions of self-concept four dimensions, viz., ‘Behavior’, Physical Appearance and Attributes’, ‘Anxiety’, and ‘Happiness and Satisfaction’ have been found significant between the group of HIV patients and Non- HIV normal patients. Finally discrepancy of results obtained has been discussed in detail.

**Keywords:** Self – Concept, HIV, Non- HIV, Patients, Bihar, India.

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## INTRODUCTION

Self – concept is one of the important dimensions of personality which gives direction to one’s whole life. Self concept refers to the experience of one’s own being. It includes what people come to know about themselves through experience, reflection, and feedback from others. Basically, self-concept is an organized cognitive structure comprising a set of attitudes and beliefs that cut across all facets of experience and action, organizing and tying together the variety of specific habits, abilities, outlooks, ideas, and feelings that a person displays. In our opinion self-concept is a central theme around which a large number of the major aspects of personality are organized. On the other hand self-esteem is the effective or emotional aspect of self and generally refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves (one’s self-worth) and self-efficacy is the individual’s confidence in their ability to control their thoughts, feelings and actions, although, self-concept can refer to the general idea we have of ourselves and self-esteem can refer to particular measures about components of self-concept. Franken

[1] suggested that self-concept is related to self-esteem in that, “People who have good self -esteem have clear differentiated self-concept..... when people know themselves they can maximize outcomes because they know what they can and can not do”. Krol *et al.*, [2] conceded that, as an element of the self-concept, self-esteem - usually described as self-acceptance or overall affective evaluation of one’s worth - has been found to be associated with both physical and psychological health. It is important to be pointed out here that as soon as arrive at a more or less stable framework of beliefs about ourselves and proceed to live in a consistent manner within that framework. This frame is known as the self – concept. In other words, self – concept refers one’s self identity, a schema consisting of an organized collection of beliefs and feelings about oneself [3]. Thus, the self – concept is a special framework that influences how we process information about the world around us along with information about ourselves, such as our motives, emotional states, self – evaluation, abilities, etc [4]. Each person’s self identity or self concept acquired through interaction with others. Self –

concept is not a fixed entity; it changes with age and in response to situational changes [5].

It is to be mentioned that many different theories of personality have suggested that in several respects, our self – concept, our beliefs and knowledge about ourselves, plays a crucial role in our total personality [6]. Moreover, it is generally viewed that persons low and high in self – esteem also differ with respect to the clarity of their own self- concepts. Persons low in self – esteem have high self – concepts that are less clear or well developed than those of persons high in self – esteem [7]. Such uncertainty has been found to be negatively related to resistance to stress; people who have less clear – cut self – concepts are more vulnerable to the harmful effects of stress [8]. This interesting finding has direct implications for people’s health.

Having scanned the survey of literature on the phenomenon, the present investigation was aimed at studying the self – concept among HIV and Non HIV patients with particular reference to Bihar state, India.

HIV originated in west central Africa during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century [9]. Since its discovery, AIDS has caused an estimated 36 million deaths world – wide. Approximately 35.3 million people are living with HIV globally [10] and AIDS is considered as pandemic [11].

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that attacks mainly CD4 cells (T cells) of the body’s immune system resulting in destruction or impairment of the functioning of these cells (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [12]; World Health Organization (WHO) [13]. It is viewed that once the body gets infected with this virus, over a period of time it results a gradual decline in the body’s resistance against infections because of destruction of CD 4 cells. This situation is called “immune deficiency” [13] which means that the body’s immune system is no longer able to perform its role of protecting the body from any foreign potentially harmful invaders. At this stage, the body becomes vulnerable to different infections and diseases. These infections which occur on account of severe immunodeficiency are termed as “opportunistic infections” [14] since these infections occur when the body’s immune system is at lowest point. It is fact that once the body gets inflicted with this virus; it remains there for the entire lifetime since there is no effective treatment available to cure HIV completely. Hence, in this situation self- concept of HIV patients may fluctuate that’s why in the present study I am very much interested to discuss about the self concept of HIV patients from the psychological point of view on the basis of review of available literature. Moreover, it is to point out here that in the growth of human being, the phase of HIV the person’s feeling is a very critical and debatable. Most of the physiological, psychological, and social changes occur during this period of life. The

period can be seen as the time of struggle to find some identity and meaning in lives. More pressure at this stage leads to poor well-being among HIV patients in general In this fast hi-tech scenario, there is need to enhance the level of comfort, happiness and well-being among by the means of awareness programme. There is a long history of interest in how different psychological, physical and social factors affect psychological well-being [15-19]. In recent years, psychological researchers have shown increasing interests in the psychological well-being of HIV patients and have carried out many valuable discussions on this issue. The significance of such researches lies in that they are conducive to acquiring a thorough knowledge of patient’s psychological feature, which in turn helps to educate them according to their problems, to prevent them from unhealthy behaviors, and to bring out their physical and intellectual potentials as well as affective performance. It is not only beneficial to Non HIV patients’ development, but also provides a new HIV free form and approach for all the people. Therefore, this problem is undertaken in deliberation to study the self-concept among HIV and Non-HIV patients with particular reference Bihar State, India.

### Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to assess whether HIV patients and Non HIV patients will differ in their self-concept and if they did who have a higher self-concept towards HIV. It is because of the fact that in all societies of the world peoples are treated differently. They receive different kind of social feedback thus, there may be different expectations and these expectations are supposed to shape the self-concept among HIV and Non HIV patients as Cattell [20] referred to self-concept as the “key stone of personality”. Thus, self-concept appears to be a comprehensive and exhaustive area which can represent the personality as a whole towards HIV at large. Recognizing its broader coverage than any other trait of personality self-concept has been chosen as one of the possible dimensions which give direction to the whole life. Self-concept importance stems from its influence over the quality of a person’s behavior and his method of adjustment to life and situation.

### Hypotheses

On the basis of the broad aims and objectives of the present study the following hypothesis were formulate:

- There will be no significance of difference between HIV and Non- HIV patients in terms of their perceived self – concept in the Bihar State.
- None of the dimensions will predict the self-concept between the group of HIV infected patients and Non – HIV normal patients.
- Non HIV patients will have higher degree of their self – concept than HIV patients.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Sample:

The present study was conducted on eighty (N=80) patients comprising HIV patients (n=40) and Non HIV patients (n=40) were personally contacted by visiting Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital and also in private clinics with the help of AIDS Counselor posted in government hospital. The equal numbers of Non – HIV patients were also selected from the same hospital. Respondents' age were ranged between 26 to 52 years.

### Tools Used

1. **Self-Concept Scale:** In order to assess self-concept of the HIV and Non – HIV patients, a scale developed by Ahluwalia [21] has been used. This questionnaire consisted of 80 items. In this scale there were 6-dimensions: Behavior, Intellectual and current status, physical appearance and attributes, anxiety, popularity, happiness and satisfaction. Each item was measured on Zero-point scale viz., 'Yes' ( ) 'No' ( ). In the scale there are 14 lie items to detect whether the patients have filled it accurately or not. The items of the scale are scored in a positive or negative direction to reflect the evaluation dimension. A high score on the scale is presumed to indicate a favorable self-concept. This self-concept scale is quite reliable as the test-retest and split half reliability coefficients are .88 and .79 respectively.
2. **Biographical Information Blank (BIB):** Biographical blank was also prepared for interpreting the results. It includes: sex, qualification, religion, area of locality, family income, father's qualification, mother's qualification, family structure, etc.

### Procedure

Before giving the above schedules, respondents were deliberated about the importance of feelings of oneself then thereafter measures were given to each HIV patients and Non – HIV normal patients individually to complete in all respect. They were also assured that the information provided by them would be kept strictly confidential and will be used research purposes only. Having collected the data, the data were tabulated for giving statistical treatment. Finally, the obtained results presented in table and discussed in detail.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In quest of obtaining the results, descriptive analysis was done by computing mean, SD, and t-test to see if there was any significant difference in obtained scores of the two groups i.e. HIV patients and Non – HIV patients. From the table-1, it is apparently clear that in the present sample there is a highly significant difference in the mean values of total self-concept as Non – HIV normal patients had shown higher degree of self-concept mean score with an SD (64.25 and 13.23) than HIV patients (57.98 and 10.09). Hence, the difference between Non-HIV and HIV patients has been found significant statistically as t – value i.e. 2.15 is found to be significant at .05 level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis that there will be no significance of difference between HIV patients and Non – HIV normal patients in the degree of their self-concept stands rejected. The results seem to be logical that HIV patients and Non- HIV normal patients do differ in their self-concept so far as their psycho – social make up of their personality is concerned. It is important to be mentioned here that one of the possible reasons for the present study is likely to be aware about the evils of HIV.

**Table-1: showing Mean, SD and t of dimensions of Self-Concept Scores among HIV patients and Non – HIV normal patients of Darbhanga Medical College and Hospitals (DMCH)**

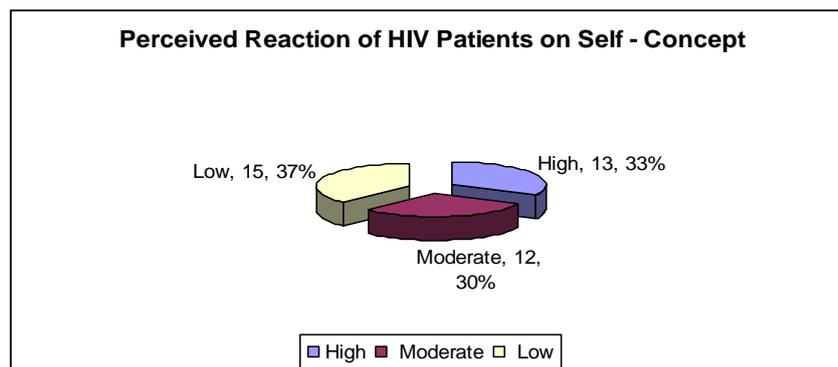
Dimensions of Self-Concept	HIV Patients (n=40)		Non – HIV Normal Patients (n=40)		t	p
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
<b>Behavior</b>	12.76	2.09	14.05	1.96	4.48	0.01
<b>Intellectual and College Status</b>	13.50	3.28	14.35	3.07	1.88	NS
<b>Physical Appearance and Attributes</b>	8.04	2.63	9.04	2.86	2.56	0.05
<b>Anxiety</b>	8.56	2.13	10.63	2.05	6.97	0.01
<b>Popularity</b>	8.63	2.11	8.62	2.14	0.11	NS
<b>Happiness and satisfaction</b>	6.74	1.38	7.56	1.18	24.62	0.01
<b>Self-Concept (Total)</b>	58.23	10.09	64.25	13.23	2.15	0.05

It is because of the fact that in our traditional society especially in Mithila region from where the present is carried out are still given greater exposure and more positive feedback towards the consequences of HIV.

In addition to the above result, it is also important to point out the area-wise analysis which

shows that out of six dimensions of self-concept, only in four areas there have been found significant differences between HIV and Non – HIV patients. In the dimensions of self-concept, 'Behavior', 'Physical Appearance and Attributes', 'Anxiety' and 'Happiness and Satisfaction' Non – HIV normal patients have shown higher degree of self-concept score so that in these areas of self-concept significance of difference





## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In the light of the results and discussion the following conclusions are drawn:

- Significance of difference has been found between the group of HIV Patients and Non-HIV Normal patients in their degree of perceived self-concept.
- Out of six dimensions of self-concept, four dimensions, namely, 'Behavior', Physical Appearance and Attributes', 'Anxiety', and 'Happiness and Satisfaction' have been found significant between the group of HIV Patients and Non- HIV Normal patients.
- Non – HIV normal patients have shown higher degree of self-concept in comparison to HIV patients, although both the group has shown positive inclination towards Self – concept.
- On the basis of observation, it is important to be mentioned here that the present era is considered as the era of modernization based on hi-info-tech so that people in general needs positive social feedback in order to enhance their self-concept, and to develop a self-image which is the need of hour for maintaining quality of dignity in their life endeavor by providing self – awareness programme pertaining to the evils of HIV which is more important for making healthy environment for nation's building. Finally, it is suggested that a larger and varied cross-cultural sample is needed for further research on the direction opted by the present investigator which will help in making strategies for the promotion of society in general and the whole nation at large.

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