

Factors Influencing Betel Nut Chewing in People Living with HIV in Myanmar

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Betel Nuts & People Living with HIV (PLWH)

- Approximately, 600M people consume betel nuts globally¹
- Chewing betel nuts is common in Myanmar, over 50% of Burmese people routinely use²
- Betel Nuts
 - Addictive stimulant effect^{2,3}
 - Group 1 carcinogen³
- A strong link between betel nut chewing and oral/oropharyngeal cancers⁴
- People who use betel nuts are 2.6 times more likely to report a HIV diagnosis⁵
- Betel nut users are at greater risk of mental health disorders (e.g., anxiety and depression)⁶



Study Design

- A secondary analysis of data study
- Primary data from PLWH in Myanmar (January – July 2020)

Primary Data Recruitment

- A private Facebook group for PLWH community in Myanmar

Inclusion Criteria

- Adults who are 18 years old or older
- Confirmed HIV diagnosis
- Currently living in Myanmar

Reliability for Independent Variables

- All variables have established high internal consistency

Concepts	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Observed Range	Number of Items	α
Physiological hyperarousal symptoms	2.13	0.80	1 – 5	28	0.97
HIV stigma	2.44	0.54	1 – 4	47	0.96
Loneliness	2.37	0.59	1 – 4	8	0.76
General stress	2.76	0.67	1 – 5	10	0.90
Depression	2.57	0.71	1 – 5	20	0.87

Dependent Variables

- Ever used betel nuts? (Yes/No)

PLWH Sample ($n=169$)

- Age range from 18-55 years old ($M=36$ years; $SD=8.8$)
- Male (60%)
- Heterosexual (66%); Gay/Lesbian (22%)
- High school (44%); College (26%)
- Married (43%); Never married (34%)

Other Characteristics

- AIDS diagnosis (35%)
- On HIV medication (90%)
- Undetectable viral load status (70%)
- No HIV disclose to family (42%)
- No health insurance (85%)

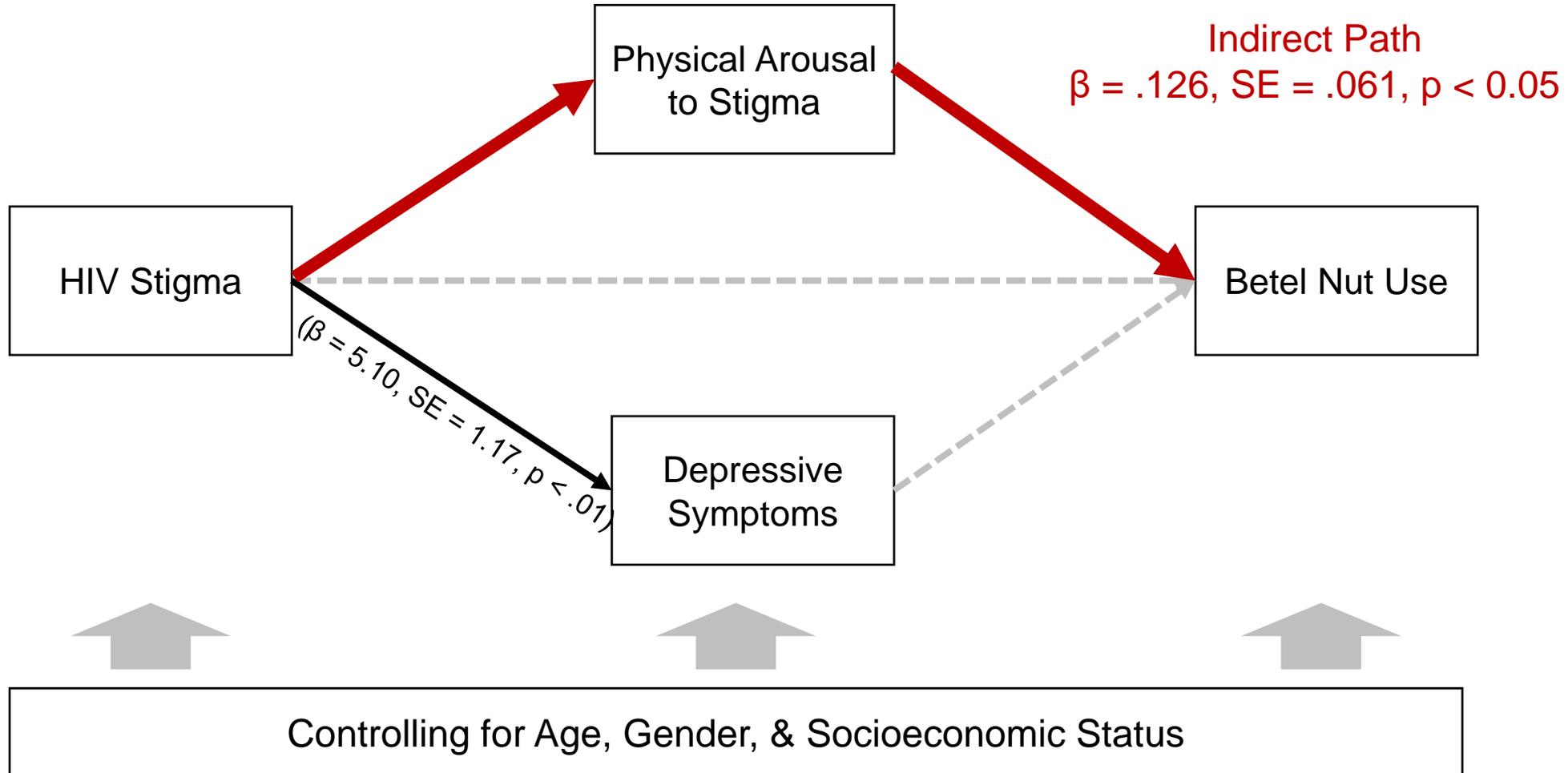
Substance Use

Substances	Never Used	Used
Betel Nuts	76%	24%
Alcohol	74%	26%
Tobacco	81%	19%
Marijuana	96%	4%
Illicit drugs	97%	3%

Logistic Regression

- Loneliness remained significant after controlling for covariates (OR= 2.66; 95%CI=1.12-6.33)

Structural Equation Model (SEM) with Betel Nut Use



Discussion

- Loneliness is more prevalent in PLWH due to stigma and discrimination
- Burmese PLWH face stronger stigma and social isolation due to Asian cultural taboo about sex
- Indirect effect on betel nut use through HIV stigma and physical arousal to HIV stigma in Burmese PLWH

Future Research

- Develop an intervention for PLWH in Southeast Asia
 - Reducing HIV stigma and loneliness
 - Reducing Betel nut chewing
 - Increasing awareness of oral cancer risk of betel nut chewing

Limitations

- Small sample size
- Findings cannot be generalizable to PLWH in Myanmar
- Self-reported data – potential biases in recall & social desirability

Thank You!

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