



## **Study reveals no links between sexual and reproductive health and HIV services in clinics in Lebanon**

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No links between Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and HIV services exist in clinics in Lebanon according to a study aimed at showing such a relationship.

In Phase III of the national study face to face interviews with supervisors, service providers, and clients from a sample of 17 HIV and 28 SRH centers revealed no links.

The results of this study, conducted by the Hariri School of Nursing, sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Ministry of Public Health (MoH), and the National AIDS Control Program (NAP) were shared with stakeholders, health care professionals, professional societies, and the public on January 14 in Issam Fares Hall. Among those present were Dr. Mostafa Nakib, NAP; Dr. Mohamad Ali Kanaan, MoH; Nada Naja Aghar, representative of Asma Kordahi, UNFPA; and Joumana Al Kadi Jurdi, representative of Dr. Salim Sayegh, Minister of Social Affairs.

Results showed that low numbers of **supervisors** report providing links between SRH and HIV services, although 98 percent expressed the desire to be trained in establishing such links. As for **clients**, the majority (67 percent) expressed the desire to receive HIV and SRH services from the same facility, yet only 41.3 percent prefer to receive these services from the same provider. Reasons listed were fear of HIV transmission from other patients and fear of stigma and discrimination—fears which might result from visiting an HIV health care provider. According to Nuhad Dumit, assistant professor at AUB's School of Nursing, the results were no surprise, but simply documentation of the situation in Lebanon.

The two main recommendations for the creation of links between SRH and HIV services are the advocacy of links at the policy level and the need to develop manuals, tools, and guidelines. Dumit expressed her hopes for the future: “As health-care professionals and health authorities,” we have much work to do “regarding the quality of services related to SRH and HIV, and a lot of educating and awareness of the public to reduce fear of HIV, stigma, and discrimination.”