

# Characterization of the Epidemiological Profile of Heterosexual and Homosexual Men Affected by HIV

Caracterização do Perfil Epidemiológico de Homens Heterossexuais e Homossexuais Acometidos pelo HIV

Caracterización del Perfil Epidemiológico de Hombres Heterossexuales y Homossexuales Afectados por el VIH

## RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Caracterizar o perfil demográfico e clínico de homens autodeclarados heterossexuais e homossexuais acometidos pelo HIV. **Método:** Trata-se de uma pesquisa de campo do tipo documental e retrospectiva, com abordagem quantitativa e descritiva, com uso de fonte de dados primários coletados em cadernos de registros do Serviço de Atenção Especializada (SAE) – em Minas Gerais, no mês de Junho de 2023, quando foi aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética e Pesquisa (CEP), N°: CAAE: 68722023.0.0000.5549. **Resultados:** Constatou-se que 81 (55,1%) dos pacientes da amostra se autodeclararam homossexuais e 66 (44,9%) heterossexuais, 20 (13,60%) eram casados, sendo 15 (75%) da classe heterossexual e 5 (25%) homossexual. Na faixa etária, a classe homossexual foi mais atingida, de 18 a 38 anos com 70 (73,69%), e a heterossexual dos 39 a 71 anos com 41 indivíduos (78,84 %). No que tange o tempo de infecção, houve variação até 24 anos (1998-2022) e a escolaridade, os homossexuais tiveram mais casos na classificação ensino superior completo, com 31 pacientes (38,27%), já os heterossexuais no fundamental incompleto, com 26 pacientes (39,39%). **Conclusão:** Concluímos que fatores como escolaridade, idade, gênero, orientação sexual e nível de informação, impactam na trajetória do HIV e na vida do indivíduo.

**DESCRIPTORIOS:** Assistência de enfermagem; Doença; HIV; Comportamento sexual; Saúde do homem.

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To characterize the demographic and clinical profile of self-declared heterosexual and homosexual men affected by HIV. **Method:** This is a documentary and retrospective field research, with a quantitative and descriptive approach, using primary data collected in registry notebooks of the Specialized Care Service (SAE) – in Minas Gerais, in June 2023, when it was approved by the Ethics and Research Committee (CEP), No.: CAAE: 68722023.0.0000.5549. **Results:** It was found that 81 (55.1%) of the patients in the sample declared themselves homosexual and 66 (44.9%) heterosexual, 20 (13.60%) were married, 15 (75%) of whom were heterosexual and 5 (25%) homosexual. In terms of age, the homosexual class was most affected, from 18 to 38 years old with 70 (73.69%), and the heterosexual class from 39 to 71 years old with 41 individuals (78.84%). Regarding the time of infection, there was a variation of up to 24 years (1998-2022) and education, homosexuals had more cases in the classification of completed higher education, with 31 patients (38.27%), while heterosexuals in incomplete elementary education, with 26 patients (39.39%). **Conclusion:** We conclude that factors such as education, age, gender, sexual orientation and level of information impact the trajectory of HIV and the individual's life.

**KEYWORDS:** Nursing care; Disease; HIV; Sexual behavior; Men's health.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivo:** Caracterizar el perfil demográfico y clínico de hombres autodeclarados heterossexuales y homossexuales afectados por VIH. **Método:** Se trata de una investigación de campo documental y retrospectiva, con enfoque cuantitativo y descriptivo, utilizando fuentes primarias de datos recolectados en cuadernos de registro del Servicio de Atención Especializada (SAE) – em Minas Gerais, em junho de 2023, cuando fue aprobado por el Comité de Ética e Investigación (CEP), No.: CAAE: 68722023.0.0000.5549. **Resultados:** Se encontró que 81 (55,1%) de los pacientes de la muestra se declararon homossexuales y 66 (44,9%) heterossexuales, 20 (13,60%) estaban casados, 15 (75%) eran heterossexuales y 5 (25%) homossexuales. Em el grupo

de edad, la clase homosexual fue la más afectada, de 18 a 38 años com 70 (73,69%), y la clase heterosexual de 39 a 71 años com 41 individuos (78,84%). Respecto al tiempo de infección, hubo una variación de hasta 24 años (1998-2022) y escolaridad, los homosexuales tuvieron más casos em la clasificación de educación superior completa, com 31 pacientes (38,27%), mientras que los heterosexuales tuvieron más casos em educación primaria incompleta, com 26 pacientes (39,39%). **Conclusión:** Concluimos que factores como la educación, la edad, el género, la orientación sexual y el nivel de información inciden em la trayectoria del VIH y em la vida del individuo.

**DESCRIPTORES:** Atención de enfermería; Enfermedad; VIH; Comportamiento sexual; Salud masculina.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sexually transmitted infections are one of the biggest public health problems in the world. In 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported an incidence of 376.4 million cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among individuals aged 15 to 49 years. In view of this, the

WHO sought to define priority actions to eliminate these infections by 2030, including the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) - 2016 to 2021 - by the Pan American Health Organization.<sup>1</sup>

HIV, the causative agent of Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome, AIDS, is a virus capable of damaging the body's

defense cells, making it susceptible to opportunistic diseases such as pneumonia, toxoplasmosis, cytomegalovirus infection, among others. Unlike other viruses, once contracted, it will live forever in the individual's body, since there is still no cure for this pathology. However, treatment with antiretrovirals has proven to be very beneficial in improving the quality of life of people

with the virus and AIDS, in addition to reducing the chances of transmission and progression of the disease.<sup>2</sup>

In 1981, knowledge of AIDS became a milestone in the history of humanity, in which the outbreak of HIV infection and AIDS portrays a global, unstable and dynamic phenomenon, which has different forms of occurrence in various places around the world, taking the individual and collective behavior of individuals as a considerable determinant. Since its emergence, AIDS has been widely discussed by the scientific community and society in general, as it gains high prominence within the classification of infectious diseases, due to its great magnitude and the size of the harm caused to populations.<sup>3</sup>

It is believed that the first source of HIV infection in humans occurred around the 19th century and was through chimpanzees from the West African region, which were carriers of the Simian Immunodeficiency Virus, which was probably transmitted when humans hunted them for meat as a source of food. Initially, the virus spread slowly throughout the African region and, soon after, to other regions of the world.<sup>4</sup>

In 1978, when gay culture was first publicly constructed, the community suffered prejudice and was treated in a stigmatized manner. This became even worse in the early 1980s in the cities of New York and San Francisco because, from that year onwards, an epidemic that until then had been completely unknown began to affect them, at the same time as the outbreak of Kaposi's Sarcoma.<sup>5</sup>

De acordo com Centro de Controle de Doenças, que realizou uma pesquisa em junho de 1981, a AIDS envolveu no início a comunidade gay e uma parte de grupos minoritários como, por exemplo, haitianos, usuários de drogas injetáveis, prostitutas, e hemofílicos. Dessa forma, antes da chegada das informações, essa patologia foi denominada como peste gay, em que ninguém

contraía HIV e sim homossexualidade.<sup>5</sup>

In Brazil, in the face of the spread of HIV, the country revealed profound social inequalities, causing considerable dimensions and undergoing significant transformations over the years. Initially, it was an epidemic limited to certain cosmopolitan groups in the country's largest metropolises, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.<sup>6</sup>

These groups were specifically composed of the male population, mainly men with homosexual practices. Currently, considering the processes of heterosexualization, interiorization, feminization and impoverishment, we can see the expansion of transmission via heterosexual contact through a substantial increase in cases in women, which has been discussed as an important point.<sup>7</sup>

A study carried out by the Epidemiological Bulletin of the Ministry of Health (MS) points out the cases of HIV infection registered in Sinan from 2007 to June 2019 in individuals over 13 years of age, according to the category of exposure, among men, it was found that 51.3% of the cases were due to homosexual or bisexual exposure and 31.4% heterosexual, and 2.0% occurred among injectable drug users, while women, in this same age group, it is noted that 86.5% of the cases fall into the category of heterosexual exposure and 1.4% in that of injectable drug users.<sup>7</sup>

The first responses to the AIDS epidemic in Brazil represented a new way of thinking and building public policies, as they resulted from the efforts of groups and social movements, such as those of minorities, in which health care for patients with HIV, as well as for various pathologies, must rely on multidisciplinary care, among various professionals, one that stands out is the nurse, who can contribute directly or indirectly to this action, using techniques through humanized reception, adequate guidance and formation of bonds as an awareness strategy, taking forward

what is rightfully considered action to improve public health problems.

This study is a field study with quantitative and descriptive analysis of records encompassing data and social profiles on the number of people with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), with an emphasis on sexual orientation. In addition to its social, interpersonal and integrative relevance, it is also extremely important for the health sector and for the area of infectious diseases, since HIV is one of the biggest public health problems currently involved.

The general objective is to identify the epidemiological profile of self-declared homosexual and heterosexual men affected by the HIV virus, who receive care at a reference Health Unit in the interior of Minas Gerais, while the specific objective is to evaluate the time of infection and treatment, analyze the characterization of the epidemiological profile, and discuss the role of the nurse in the care of patients affected by HIV.

## METHOD

This is a retrospective documentary study with a quantitative and descriptive approach, using primary data sources, in the registry notebooks of the Specialized Care Service (SAE - *Serviço de Atenção Especializada*), a reference health center in the city of Patos de Minas, in the interior of Minas Gerais. The data were collected in the registry notebook, which contains information on patients diagnosed with HIV, self-declared heterosexual and homosexual, and who receive outpatient care at the SAE, from January 2021 to December 2022. A form was prepared to collect data with the epidemiological variables to be studied: age; marital status; level of education; sexual orientation; time of infection. Anonymity was preserved, as it will not be made available in the database.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, expressing the variables in absolute and relative numbers.

SPSS software was used, and presented in graphs and tables, since the presentation of the results and discussion of the data obtained was done in a descriptive manner, allowing the reader to evaluate the applicability of the study, in order to achieve the objective of this study.

It is important to note that even though this is a study involving public domain data, without direct involvement of human beings, the study was approved by the Ethics and Research

Committee of the University Center of Patos de Minas – MG/UNIPAM under CAAE: 68722023.0.0000.5549; and the Free and Informed Consent Form (TCLE) was waived.

The results found in the form of data will have their reliability guaranteed for use, solely and exclusively, to achieve the proposed objectives of the study. This information was used to develop the work as a requirement for the completion of the course.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data records of patients diagnosed with HIV, self-declared heterosexual and homosexual, and who receive outpatient care at the SAE, in the period from January 2021 to December 2022, it was possible to verify the presence of the record of 147 individuals who met the inclusion criteria, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1 – Characterization of the demographic profile of heterosexual and homosexual men affected by HIV**

Variables	Categories	Total	Percentage
Sex	Male	147	100%
Sexual orientation	Homosexual	81	55,1%
	Heterosexual	66	44,9%
Marital status	Single	119	80,9%
	Married	20	13,6%
	Stable union	08	5,4%
Age	18 - 20 years	05	3,4%
	21 - 25 years	21	14,2%
	26 - 30 years	33	22,4%
	31 - 35 years	25	17%
	36 - 40 years	17	11,5%
	41 - 50 years	26	17,6%
	51 - 60 years	13	8,8%
	Over 60 years	07	4,7%
Education	Incomplete Elem. school	27	18,3%
	Complete Elem. school	18	12,2%
	Incomplete High School	06	4%
	Complete High school	42	28,5%
	Incomplete Higher education	15	10,2%
	Complete Higher education	35	23,8%
	Illiterate	04	2,7%

Source: Adapted from SAE, 2023.

In view of this, Freitas et. al. (2020) state that male individuals are the most

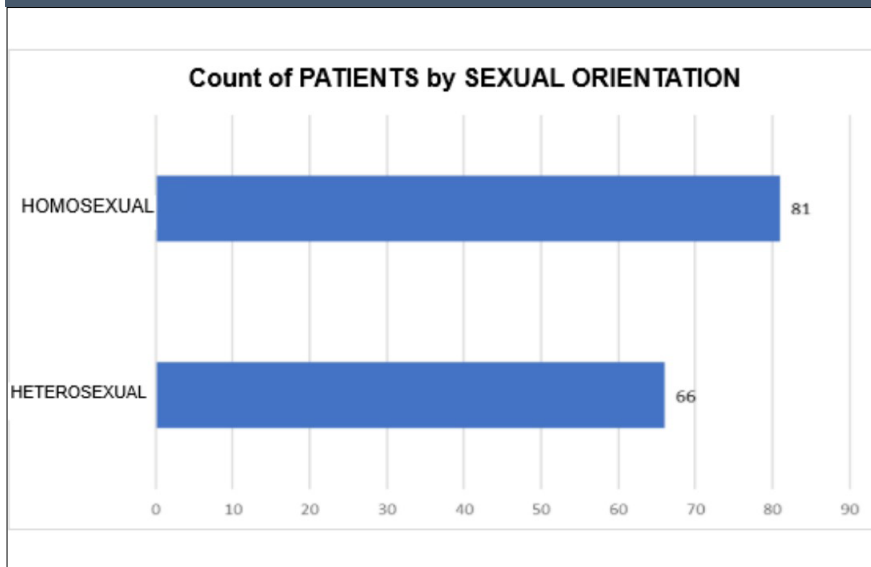
affected by the HIV virus, similar to what is presented by Brasil (2022) when analyzing the indicators and basic data

on HIV/AIDS in Brazilian municipalities from 1980 to 2022.

# Original Article

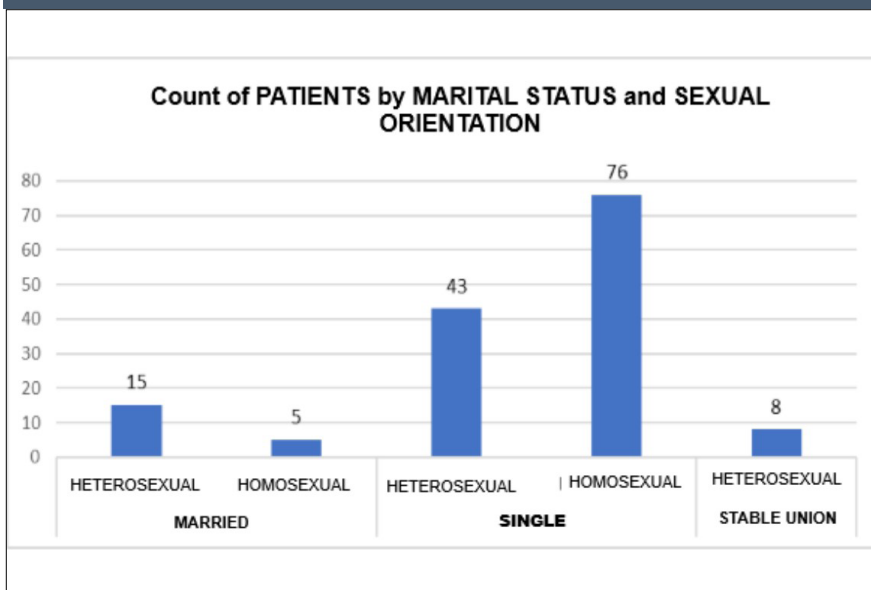
Silva MT, Santos LC, Gouvea AA, Santana AM, Reis GPF, Souza LD, Teixeira MF, Roque MHG  
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Graph 1 – Sexual orientation of HIV-positive individuals in Patos de Minas – MG from 2021 to 2022



Fonte: Adaptado do SAE, 2023.

Gráfico 2 – Estado civil com distinção de orientação sexual de HIV positivos em Patos de Minas-MG de 2021 a 2022



Source: Adapted from SAE, 2023.

Regarding the marital status of the patients in the study, 119 (80.95%) were single, 43 of whom were heterosexual (36.13%), and 76 (63.86%) were homosexual, with 20 (13.60%)

married patients, 15 (75%) of whom were heterosexual and 5 (25%) were homosexual. Only 8 patients in a stable union were heterosexual, as shown in Graph 2.

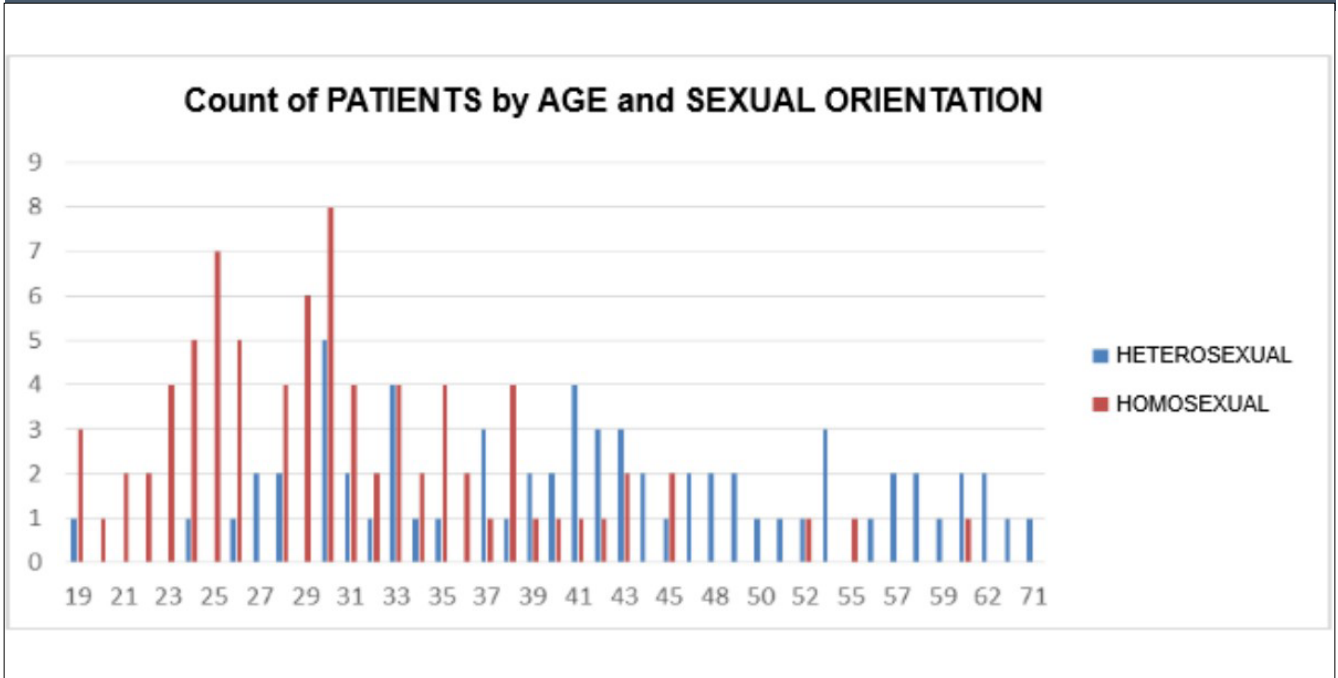
According to Agostini et al. (2019)

Considering the data analyzed regarding the entire research in the municipality of Patos de Minas-MG, which is equivalent to a sample of 147 (100%), of these, 81 (55.1%) declared themselves homosexual and 66 (44.9%) declared themselves heterosexual, as shown in (Graph 1).

Between the years 1984 to 1996, the prevalence of cases reported in homosexuals, which was 71%, reached 16% in 1999. Considering the same period of time and the change in transmission categories, it is clear to Brito, Castilho, Szwarcwald (2001) that there was an increase in the prevalence of cases in heterosexuals. While, for Brasil (2022) and Brito et al. (2021) have the same opinion when stating that, with regard to the hierarchical exposure category, heterosexuals lead as the most affected class since the 1990s, followed by homosexuals and, shortly after, by injectable drug users (IDU).

and Santos et al. (2019) state that drug therapy has enabled better life prospects, reintegrating people into the job market and rebuilding their professional and emotional life projects. In the document entitled Clinical Protocol and Therapeutic Guidelines for Managing HIV Infection in Adults (BRAZIL, 2018), it is stated that “Every person living or living with HIV has the right to continue their civil, professional, sexual and affective life, and no action may restrict their full rights to citizenship”. Therefore, marital status would not be a predisposing factor or an interfering factor when related to the HIV virus, when brought to the perspective of the work carried out.

Graph 3 – Age with distinction of sexual orientation of HIV positive people in Patos de Minas – MG from 2021 to 2022

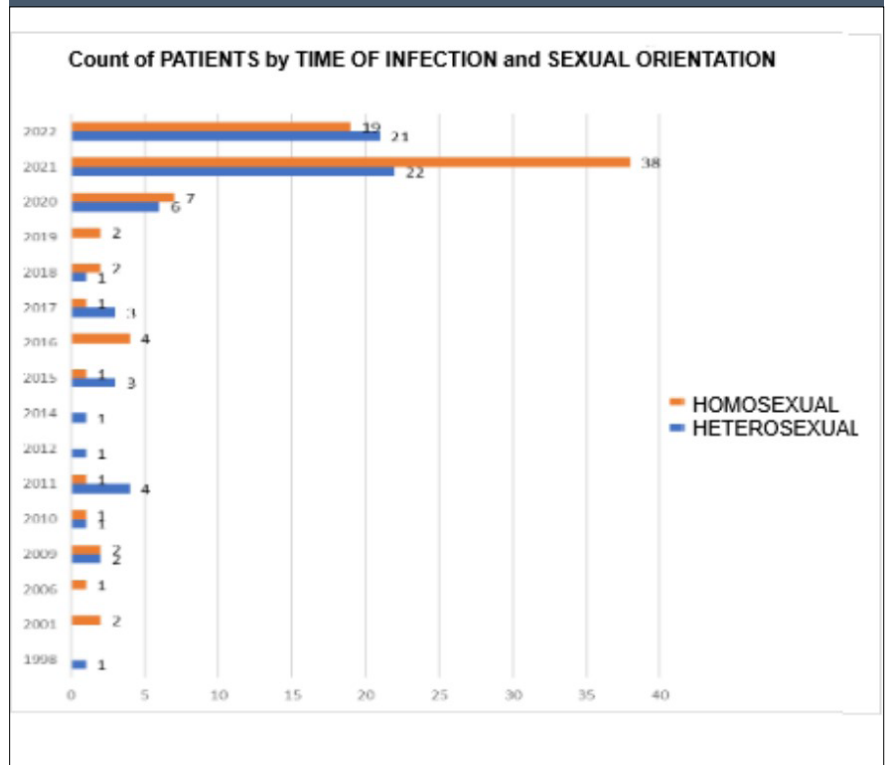


Source: Adapted from SAE, 2023.

In the characterization of the demographic profile, as shown in Graph 3, a significant variation of the virus is observed by age group of both classes, with the highest incidence in the homosexual class, for example, in the age group of 18 to 38 years, with 70 individuals (73.69%), while in this same age group the heterosexual class had 25 individuals (26.31%). However, the peak incidence of the heterosexual class occurred among the age group of 39 to 71 years, with 41 individuals (78.84%), while in this same age group homosexuals had 11 affected individuals (21.15%).

An important factor highlighted by Campos et al. (2014), to be taken into consideration, is the age group, as the data not only show the number of cases in each group, but also suggest the risk behavior most present in a specific age group, which in the studies, varied from 20-39 years, in which sexual activity is at its peak and in the case of young people with an average age of 15-20 years, biological, psychological and social factors are reflected.

Graph 4 – Infection time with distinction of sexual orientation of HIV positive individuals in Patos de Minas-MG from 2021 to 2022



Source: Adapted from SAE, 2023.

# Original Article

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Regarding the characterization of the clinical profile, it is clear that 147 (100%) were diagnosed with HIV between 1998 and 2022, and that in 2021, the homosexual community led the ranking of diagnosed cases, with 38 individuals (63.33%), and the heterosexual community had 22 diagnosed individuals (36.66%), with a change in this scenario in 2022, when the heterosexual class assumed this leadership, with 21 diagnosed individuals (52.5%), while the homosexual class had 19 diagnosed cases (47.5%). It can be seen that, in general, individuals had a time of infection that varied from up to 24 years (1998-2022), as shown in Graph 4.

It can be seen that the shorter the year, the lower the rates of affected patients when associated with the time of infection, a point that could be ex-

plained, for example, by the lack of adherence to treatment with antiretroviral therapy (ART) and the lack of health monitoring in the past, due to the lack of information on the subject, thus resulting in possible deaths.

According to Batista et al. (2021), statistical data from 2005 to 2020 show a significant increase in the number of people living with HIV and a decrease in the number of new infections due to the increase in the number of people with access to ART which, according to Agostini et al. (2019), Santos et al. (2019) and Jesus et al. (2017) show that with drug therapy, HIV is no longer a significant cause of death, enabling better life prospects, reinserting people into the job market and rebuilding professional and emotional life projects.

and in the illiterate category, 1 patient (1.23%). Unlike the heterosexual class, the level of education was as follows: for the incomplete higher education category 1 patient (1.51%), completed higher education 4 patients (6.06%), incomplete secondary education 4 patients (6.06%), completed secondary education 14 patients (21.21%), incomplete elementary education 26 patients (39.39%), completed elementary education 14 patients (21.21%) and in the illiterate category 3 patients (4.54%).

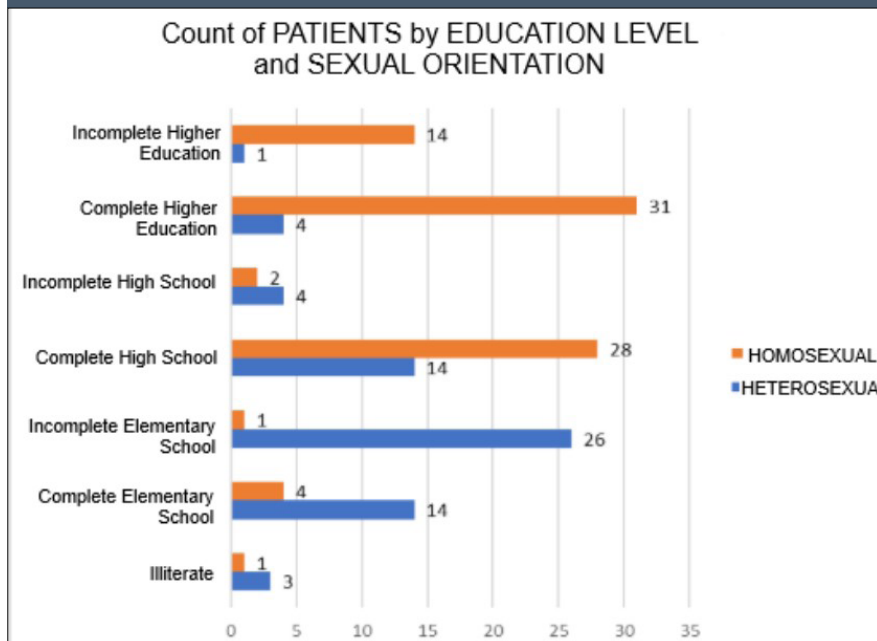
According to data from Brazil (2022), when it comes to education, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is higher in people who studied up to incomplete 8th grade and lower in those who studied up to incomplete higher education, a conclusion similar to that identified by Freitas et al. (2020) when they realized that there was an increase in the number of cases in the elderly, because in addition to the difficulty in adhering to treatment, there is also a low level of education. Linking these statements with the study carried out, such agreement is observed when we talk about the heterosexual community, but it does not apply directly to the data collected from the homosexual class.

With this, Maia and Reis (2019) state that gender, race, poverty, sexuality, age and level of education are factors linked to HIV susceptibility, in which the greater the support network and access to information, the less fragility presented. In this same context, Brazil (2022) discusses the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) and highlights the obligations guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution, presenting specific legislation to groups most vulnerable to prejudice and intolerance, such as homosexuals, the elderly, women, black people, among others.

## CONCLUSION

Considering the relevance of this topic, this study sought to understand the aspects and characteristics of the

Graph 5 – Level of education with distinction of sexual orientation of HIV-positive people in Patos de Minas-MG from 2021 to 2022



Source: Adapted from SAE, 2023.

From the perspective of education level, homosexuals showed the following numbers – for the incomplete higher education category, 14 patients (17.28%) were identified, 31 patients

(38.27%) had completed higher education, 2 patients (2.46%) had completed secondary education, 28 patients (34.56%) had completed primary education, 1 patient (1.23%) had completed primary education, 4 patients (4.93%)

epidemiological profile of self-declared homosexual and heterosexual men affected by the HIV virus, showing how it is clear that factors such as education, age, gender, sexual orientation and level of information directly impact the trajectory of HIV and the life of the individual, also presenting themselves as factors of susceptibility to the virus, taking into account individual and collective behaviors of certain groups.

It is important to emphasize the importance of the nursing team, which has been standing out more and more for

its autonomy and scientific basis, providing important assistance in the care of HIV-positive patients, knowing how to carry out qualified and humanized listening, strengthening a relationship of trust, clarity and targeted guidance on possible appropriate treatments and sequential follow-ups.

Given the data listed in the study, it is necessary to create action plans aimed exclusively at the most affected group, which would currently be heterosexuals, without neglecting the less affected class, but offering specific attention to

those who are more likely to contract and transmit the virus, so that more direct health promotion practices can be outlined for them.

It is worth noting that this study is not free from limitations, as the approach was carried out in a specific region of the interior, with some specific characterization factors isolated when associated with studies carried out in Brazil as a whole. However, it enabled new knowledge by providing relevant information for the area covered by the study.

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