

Blaming the victim? Results of a vignette study on the stigmatization of HIV-positive individuals

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Objectives

Background & Theory

People infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) face discrimination in various areas of their lives. HIV could be categorized as an individual character deficiency and false prejudices about HIV can lead to stereotyping of infected individuals (1). Incorrect knowledge about the infection path has been identified in some studies as a reason for stigmatization of HIV-positive people (2,3).

Research question and Hypotheses

Why does an HIV infection lead to social distance among others?

H1: presumed self-inflicted infection path → more social distance

H2: the closer the contact → the more social distance

H3: homosexuals → more social distance

Data

Survey method

Where?

TU Chemnitz

Who?

students of the
Faculty of Human
and Social Sciences

How?

online vignette study

When?

2017

office
worker,
rescue
service

Mr.

35, 55

Vignettes

Ms. Fischer is 45 years old, HIV-positive, heterosexual, contracted the infection from a contaminated blood transfusion, and works in a bakery in the food production department.

What kind of contact would you be willing to have with the person described?

social distance scale

Non occupational									close		NA
friendship											
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

heterosexual

frequently
changing
partners,
intravenous
drug use

Sample

age: 18-58 $\bar{x} = 28,88$

female: 76,86%

male: 23,14%

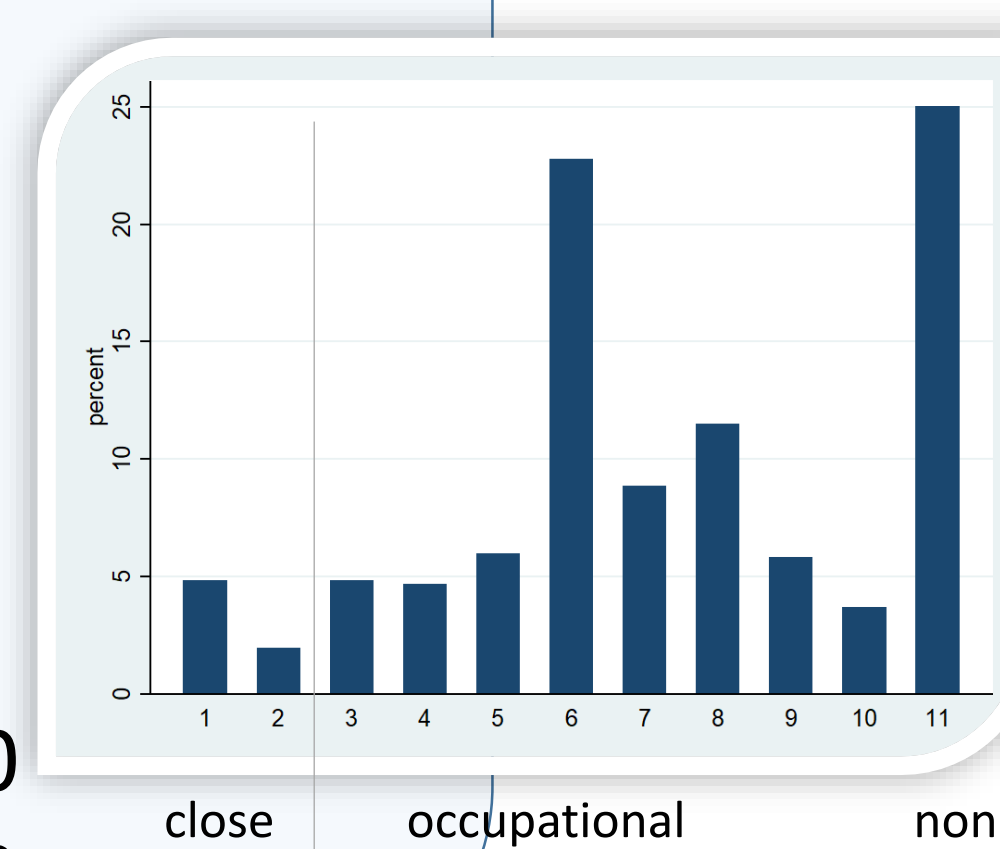
heteros.: 57,02%

homos.: 42,09%

N vignettes: 1320

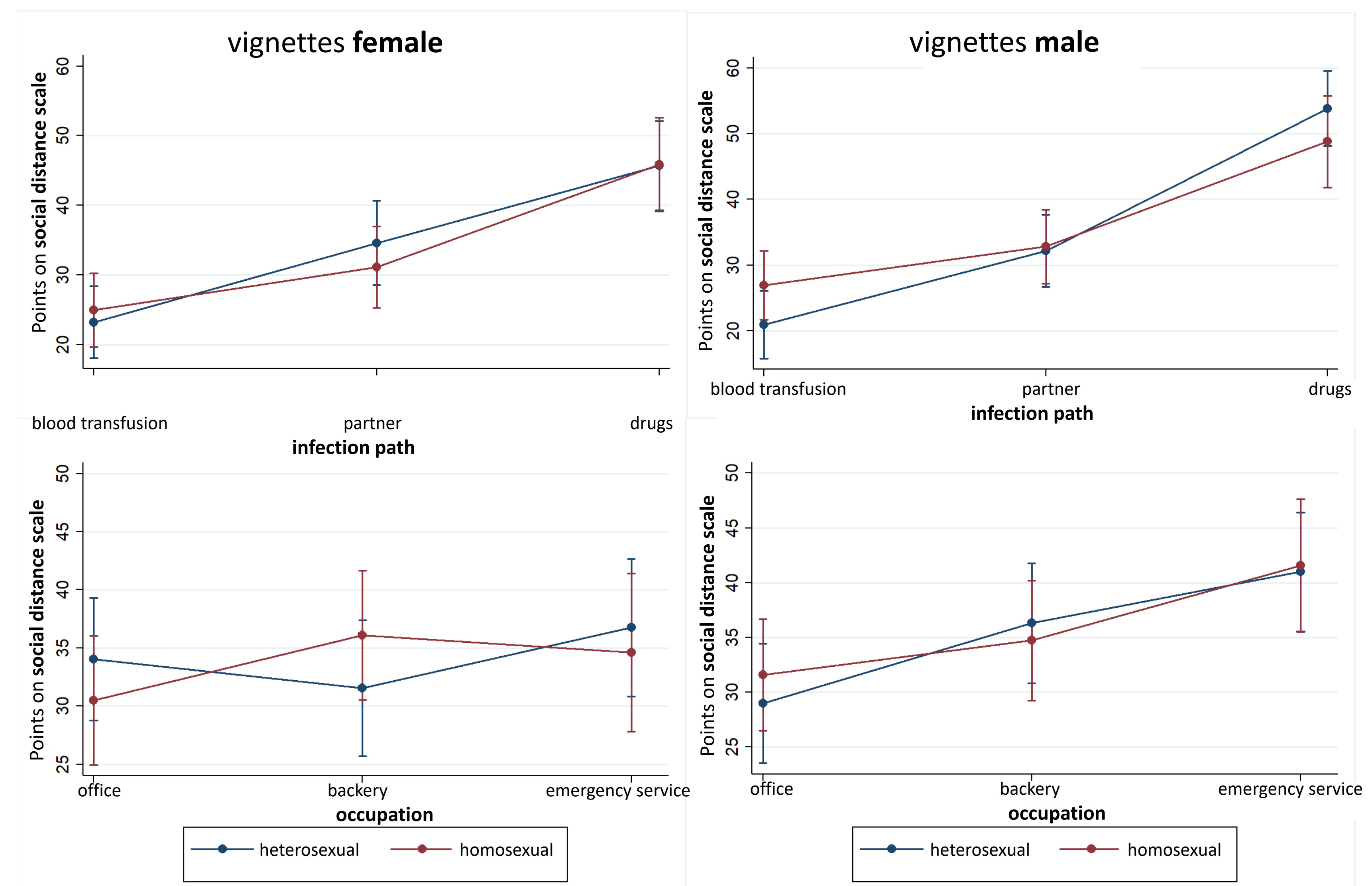
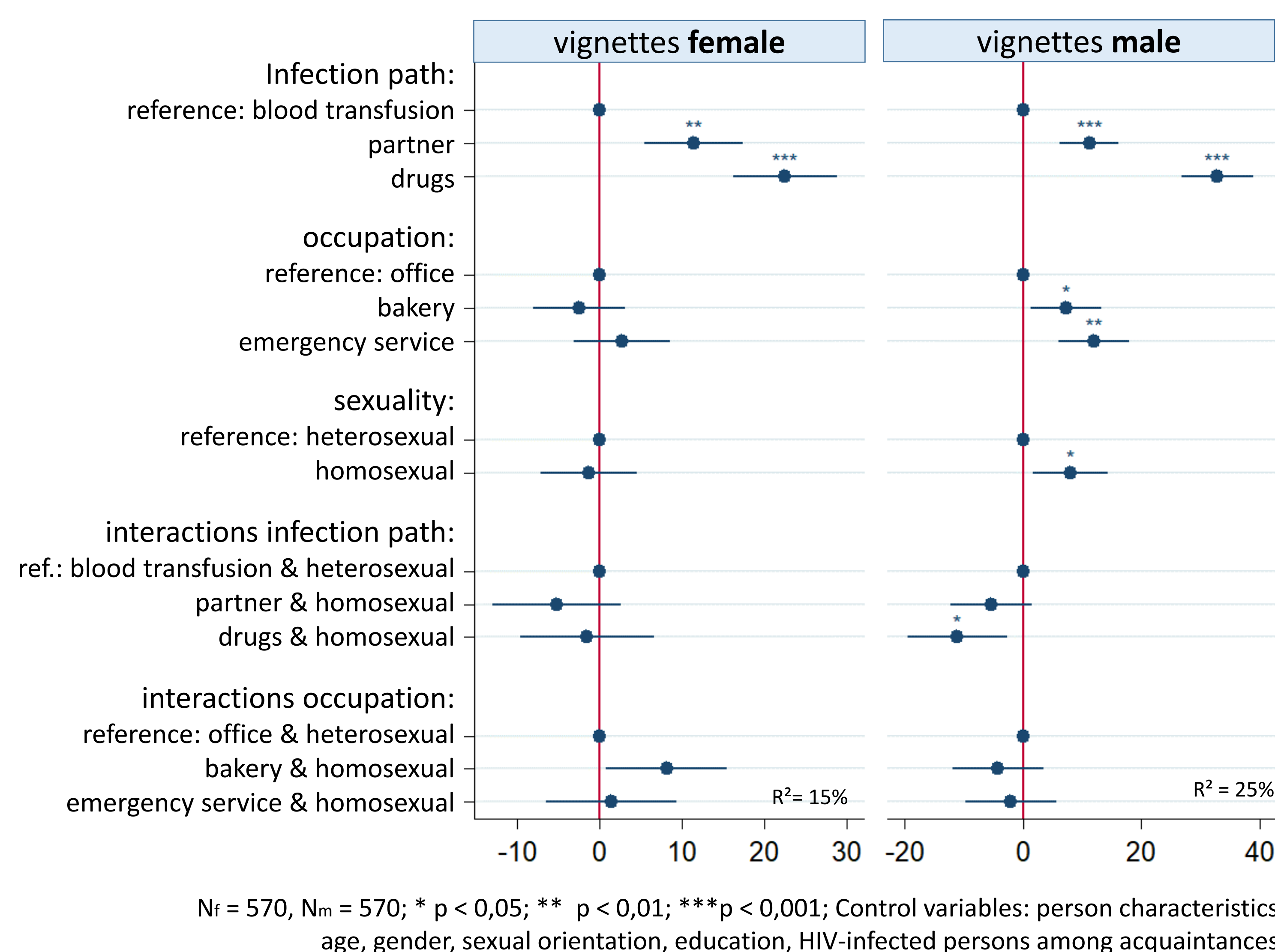
N respondents: 1140

social distance scale



Results

Multiple linear regression with dependent variable: social distance scale from 0 (close friendship) to 100 (no contact at all)



Discussion

Overall

Victim blaming based on occupation, social closeness, sexual orientation and gender

Particularly

Particularly high stigmatization among male homosexuals infected with HIV

Conclusion

There is an urgent need for education about the HI virus and sexual orientations!

Interpretation & Limitations

- more frequent stigmatization of homosexuals possibly due to predominant HIV involvement of males who have homosexual intercourse
- representativeness, as it is primarily addressed to students who are predominantly female, from the social science and psychological fields

References

- Goffman E (2003) Stigma. Über Techniken der Bewältigung beschädigter Identität, 1. Aufl. Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft Sonderausgabe. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main.
- Badahdah AM, Sayem N (2010) HIV-related knowledge and AIDS stigma among college students in Yemen. East Mediterr Health J 16(8):901-906.
- Kingori C, Nkansah MA, Haile Z et al (2017) Factors associated with HIV related stigma among college students in the midwest. AIMS Public Health 4(4):347-363.