

Going nowhere slowly:

Trends Of HIV Stigma Attitudes in South Africa

BACKGROUND

Despite significant progress made in the fight against HIV in South Africa, HIV-related stigma continues to be a driver of the epidemic and a challenge to HIV prevention, treatment, and care efforts. Not much is known about the changes in stigma over time in South Africa at a national level. The aim of this study was to assess the changes in HIV-related stigma

METHODS

Data from three South African National HIV Household surveys were used. Four external HIV stigma items from each survey were used to measure trends. Secondary data analysis was conducted.

*Q1: If you knew that a shopkeeper or food seller had HIV, would you buy food from them? Q2: Would you be willing to care for a family member with AIDS? Q3: Is it a waste of money to train or give a promotion to someone with HIV? Q4: Would you want to keep the HIV positive status of a family member a secret?

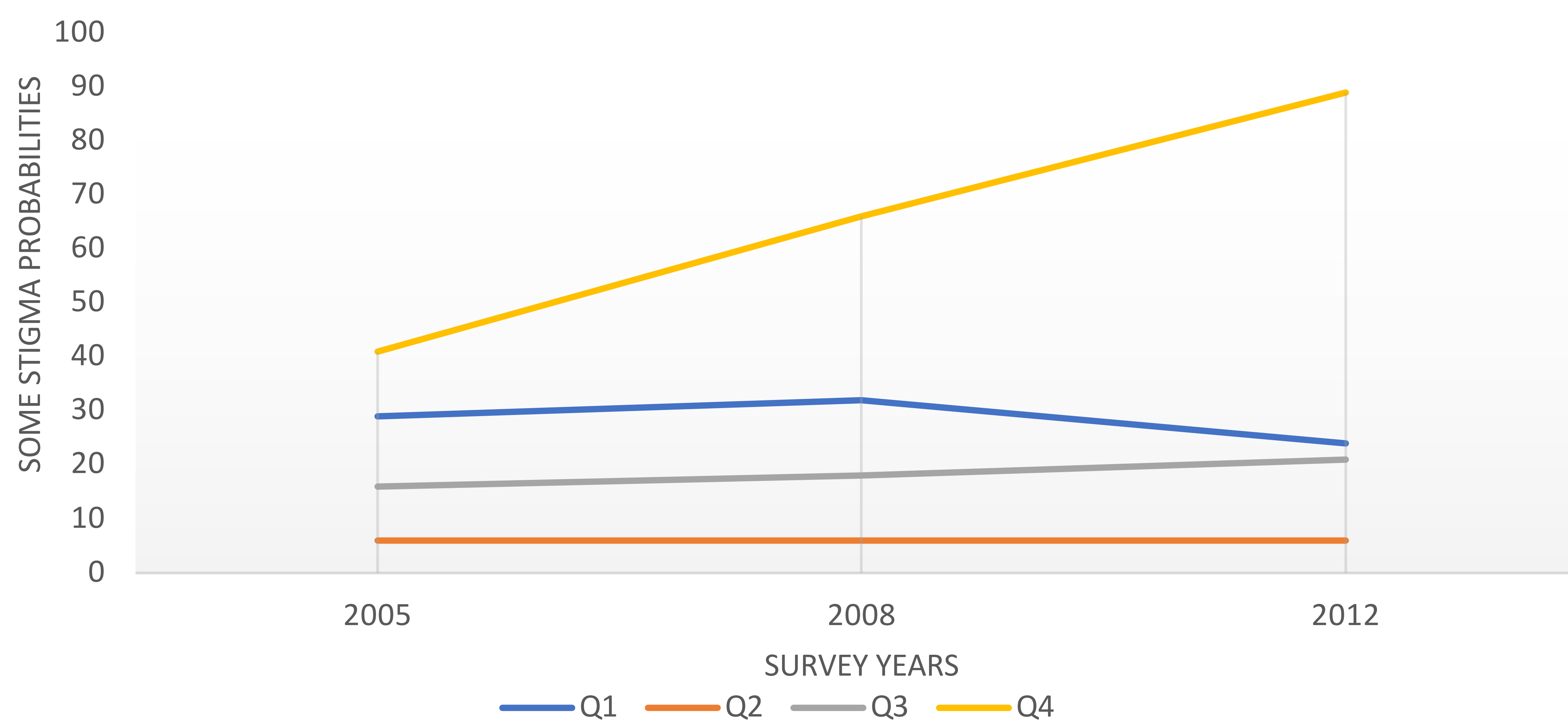


Fig 1. General stigma trends

RESULTS

The results revealed a slight decrease in the reporting of stigma over time to two of the stigma items (Q1 and Q2), with an increase to two of the stigma items (Q3 and Q4).

For Q1, there was change in reporting stigma showing a steady decrease from 2005 and 2008 as well as from 2008 to 2012. This observed change was statistically significant (28% in 2005, 31% in 2008, and 24% in 2012) ($P < 0.001$). For Q2, a non-significant trend was observed, with reporting stigma remaining similar throughout 2005, 2008 and 2012 for Q2 (5%, 6%, 5% respectively) ($P = 0.5866$). For Q3, there was a significant linear trend with an increase in the reporting of stigma throughout 2005, 2008 and 2012 (0.16%, 0.18%, and 0.21% respectively) ($p < 0.001$). For Q4, a significant linear trend with an increase in the reporting of stigma in the three points in time: 2005, 2008 and 2012 was observed (0.41%, 0.66%, and 0.89% respectively) ($P < 0.001$). The study shows that HIV-related stigma still exists and somewhat increasing over the years.

CONCLUSION

To be able to develop effective HIV-related stigma interventions, there is a need to monitor the status core of HIV-related stigma using population-based studies, which will be done periodically.