

Intense Stigma as a Barrier to Mpox Outbreak Control: Insights from VERDI Nigeria

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Background

Stigma contributes to social exclusion and reduced healthcare-seeking behaviors. The VERDI Nigeria study explored mpox-related stigma among healthcare workers (HCWs), adults and caregivers of children infected with mpox.

Methods

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Nine In-depth Interviews (IDIs)
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Seven Key-informant Interviews (KIIs)
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Six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- An innovative rapid qualitative analysis approach was used to conduct interviews with pre-tested, semi-structured guides to facilitate the data collection.
 - The use of Rapid Assessment Procedure (RAP) sheets circumvented time-consuming transcription for analysis.
 - Findings were interpreted through the Health Stigma and Discrimination Framework focusing on the Manifestations domain.
 - Duration of data collection was between April to July 2024.

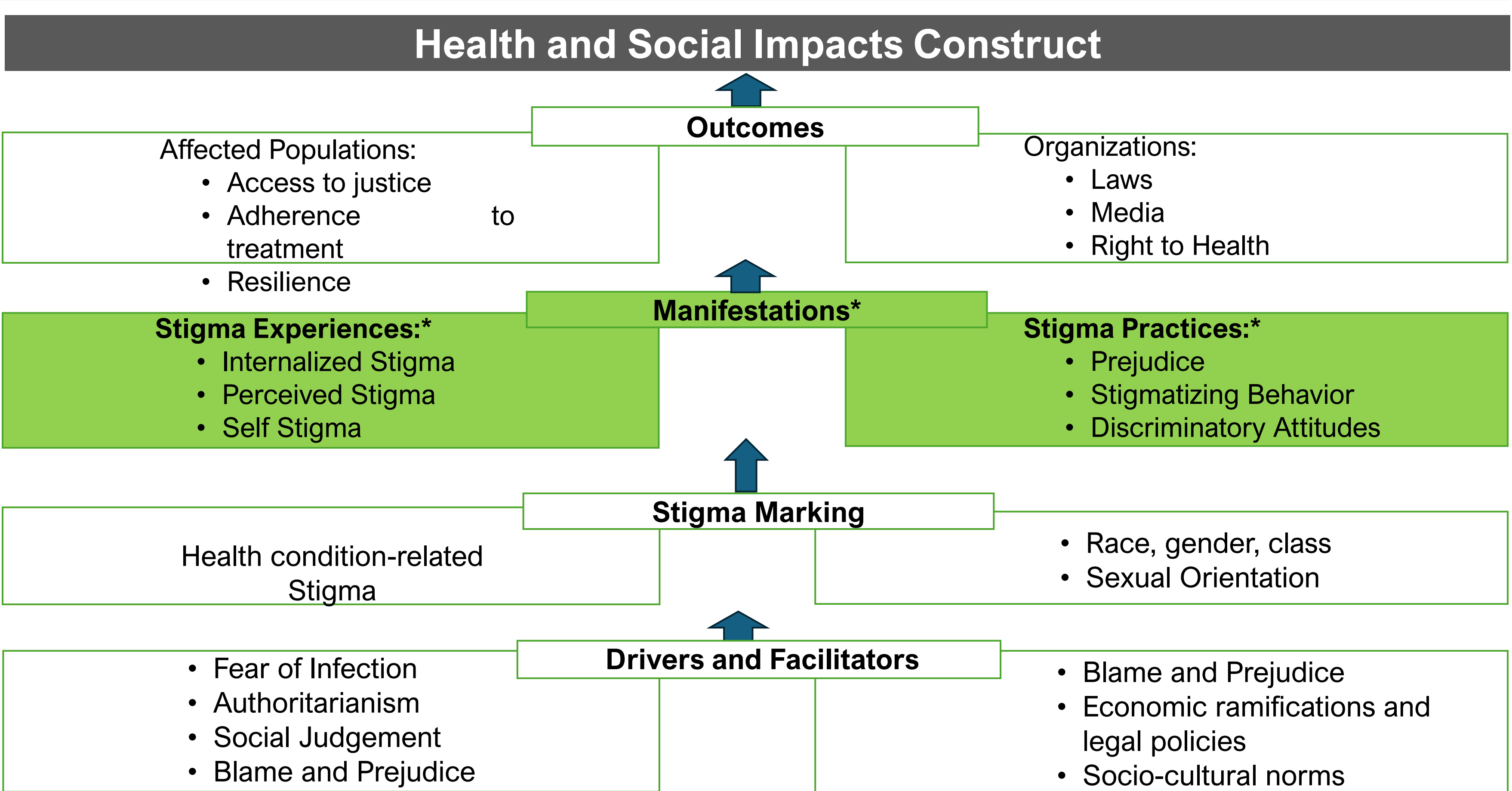
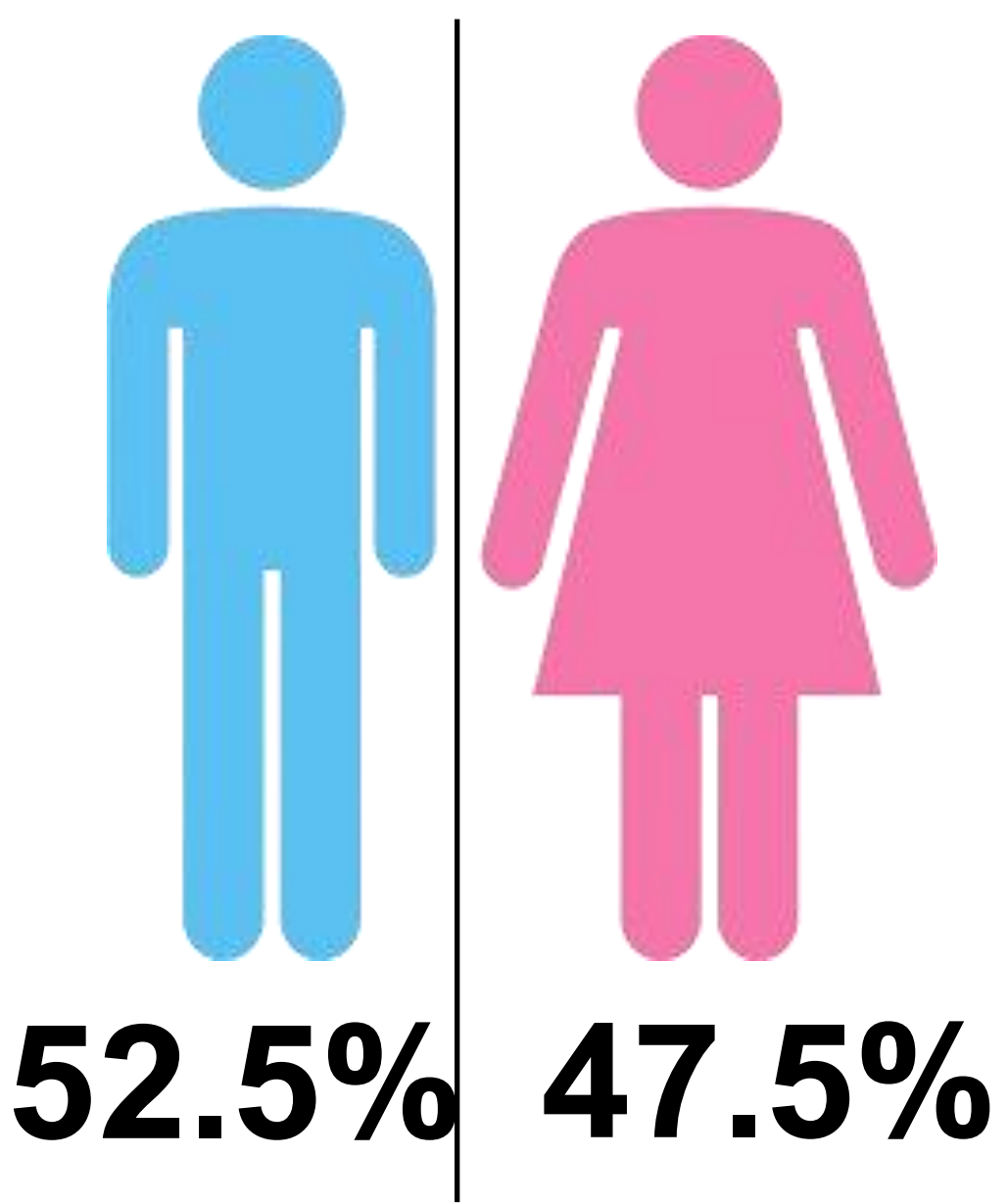


Fig. 1: Health Stigma and Discrimination Framework

Findings

A total of 40 participants:



9 (24%) Mpox affected adults and caregivers of affected children.

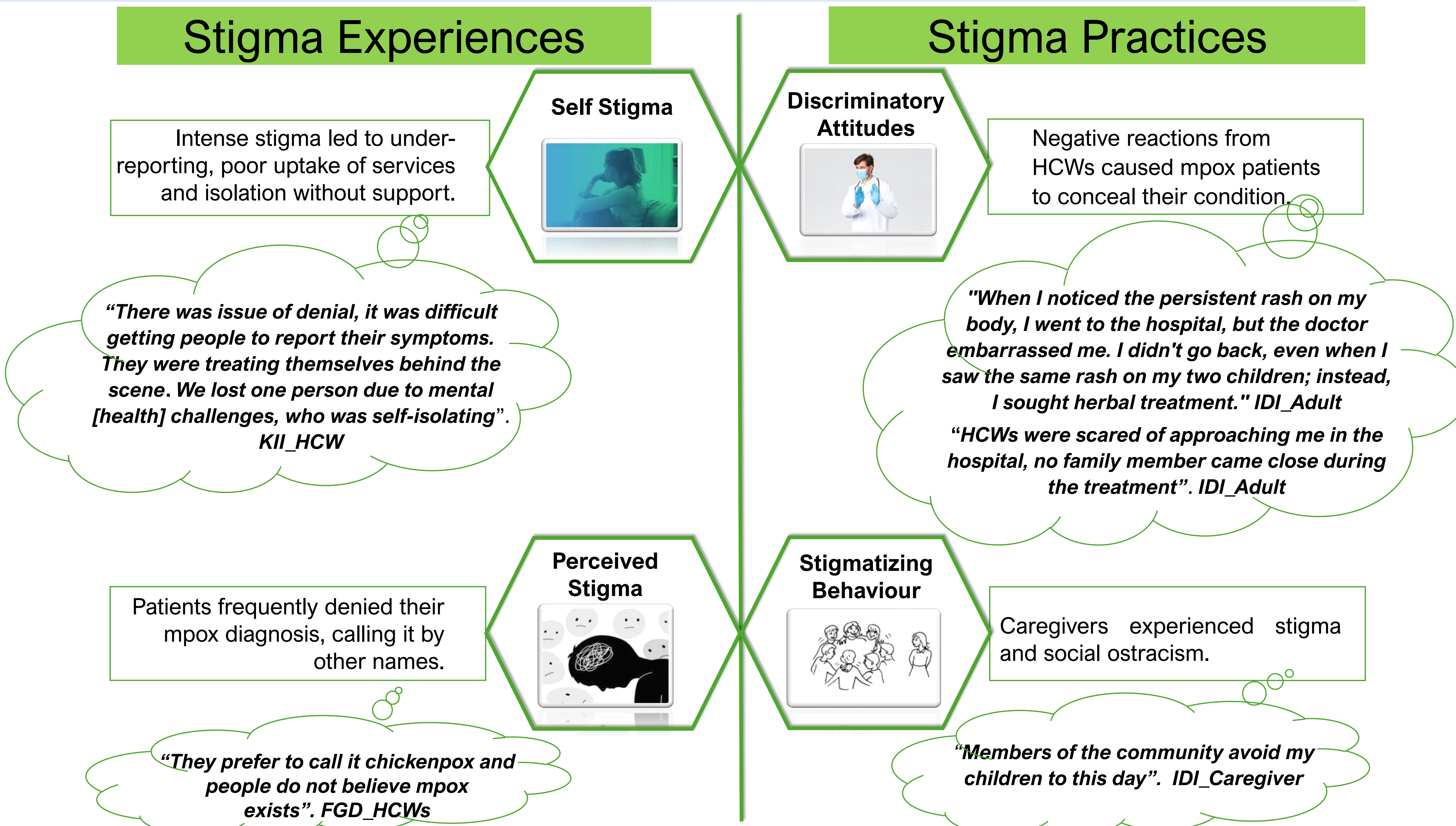


Fig. 2: Manifestations of Stigma: Insights from VERDI Nigeria

Interpretation

Unaddressed stigma has fueled denial of mpox diagnosis and stigmatizing treatment and discrimination of patients by HCWs in Nigeria. This is a significant barrier to outbreak control efforts in public health, clinical care, and research. Multifaceted strategies, including community engagement/education and HCW training/sensitization are crucial to the response and for patient outcomes.

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