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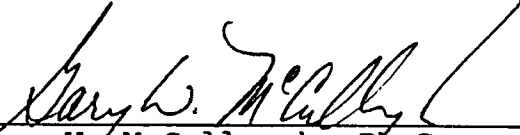
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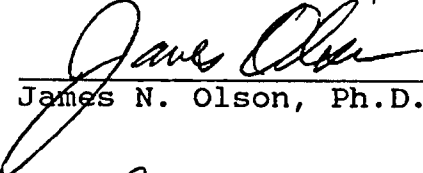
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ATTRIBUTION OF STIGMA AS A FUNCTION OF
DISEASE AND MODE OF TRANSMISSION

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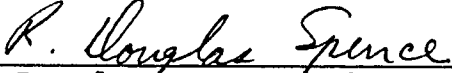
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ATTRIBUTION OF STIGMA AS A FUNCTION OF
DISEASE AND MODE OF TRANSMISSION

by

ALFRED MAXDEE DECKER, B.A.

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Faculty of Psychology

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin

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of Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN

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Abstract

The knowledge and attitudes of Odessa College health care students (N=114) towards hypothetical patients infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or hepatitis B virus (HBV) were measured via questionnaires.

Transmission variables for infection were: anal sex with another man, injecting drug use, or blood transfusion.

An Attribution Theory model was used to explain differences in knowledge and attitudes. Results suggest that students tend correctly to identify HBV as being more infectious than HIV and also to recognize that as future health care workers they are much more likely to die from HBV than HIV infection. In spite of this knowledge, it appears that attributional biases may allow health care students to view HIV patients more negatively than HBV patients. There was also a significant transmission effect, with anal sex and injecting drug use being viewed more negatively than a blood transfusion. These results are significant beyond the $p < .05$ level, and suggest that HIV may be more stigmatized than HBV because of a perceived association with male to male sex and injecting drug use.