

A COMMUNITY SURVEY OF HPV-RELATED CANCER RISK AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV

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Background/Purpose:

In 2016 Positive Life NSW (Positive Life) conducted an Anal Cancer Awareness Survey. Results from this survey highlighted a significant lack of data from women living with HIV (WLHIV), as only 4 HIV-positive women participated in the survey. WLHIV are three times more likely to develop cervical cancer, and are also at greater risk for anal, vaginal, and vulvar cancers. Furthermore, the National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) released guidelines specifically for immunocompromised women in December 2017. Positive Life and the National Network of WLHIV developed a survey in 2018 aimed at understanding if WLHIV have accurate interpretations of screening according to their risk profile. We also sought to understand and assess WLHIV's experiences with accessing services to prevent, treat, and recover from HPV-related cancers.

Approach:

Women were central to the development and implementation of this online survey, which was peer-reviewed by key informants and assessed by South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Human Research Ethics Committee. Promotion and dissemination involved mobilising HIV sector partners and clinics across Australia, utilising social media, and leveraging promotion at events and on national awareness days.

Outcomes/Impact:

Results of this survey will identify barriers and gaps in knowledge that could be contributing to higher rates of HPV-related cancer in WLHIV. Survey results will also assist in developing educational resources and improving advocacy for WLHIV. This survey is an important start to collecting meaningful data on WLHIV, improving health outcomes for WLHIV, and ending the invisibility of this priority population.

Innovation and Significance:

The survey results will be significant for WLHIV as well as the NCSP; preliminary results indicate a need for education on interpreting screening guidelines for immunocompromised women, particularly those who do not receive screening reminder notifications. Positive Life's peer-driven approach has the potential to inform future efforts to survey other hard-to-reach populations.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No disclosure of interests.