

A retrospective Cohort Study of Women and Men attending an HIV Clinic in a Public Hospital

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Background:

At University Hospital Geelong, a cohort study was completed on the characteristics of men and women diagnosed with HIV between 2009 and 2020, in order to further identify the healthcare needs of women living with HIV in this region.

Methods:

A retrospective cohort study of 35 women and 135 men, living with HIV who attended the clinic between 2009 and 2020. Comparison of findings between the men and women occurred, using cross tabulation analysis and applying Pearson's χ^2 test.

Results:

The women were diagnosed younger with HIV than the men (mean 29.5 years vs 36.7 years) and more were born in African regions (28.6% vs 5.2%). More men than women presented with sexually transmittable infections (38.5% vs 14.3%) at the time of diagnosis, and more men received their HIV diagnosis as a result of a sexual health screen (37% vs 17.1%). The proportion of men and women who used alcohol and other drugs (recent to their diagnosis) was similar (68.1% vs 48.6%). Findings of the quantitative data demonstrated no gender differences were found on most other measures.

Conclusion:

Findings of this study, show men were more likely to have been diagnosed via sexual health screens, and women via incidental findings. Although women present with comparable illnesses as their male participants, the view that women are assumed to be at lower risk is a significant barrier to women receiving adequate sexual health education, screening, or prophylactic medication.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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