

Ageing well with HIV: Exploring factors limiting quality of life for people living with HIV aged 50 years and over in Australia.

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Background: In 2020, over half of the people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Australia were estimated to be aged 50+. Despite this, there is limited data describing quality of life (QoL) in this population. Understanding the factors that influence QoL as PLHIV age is critical to ensuring that health and support models are available and allocated. We describe the QoL of a national sample of PLHIV aged 50+ years and identify how HIV communities, stigma and access to health services are associated with QoL.

Methods: Cross-sectional data were collected between December 2018–May 2019 through the HIV Futures 9 survey, a national survey assessing the health and wellbeing of PLHIV. QoL was measured using PozQoL, a validated QoL scale for PLHIV. Responses range from 1-“Not at all” to 5-“Extremely” based on how much the statement applies across 13 items (higher scores indicating higher QoL). Mean total PozQoL score was the primary outcome. Linear regression estimated the associations between the three selected factors and quality of life, adjusting for age, education level, and gender.

Results: Among the 319 participants aged 50+ years, the mean total QoL score for PLHIV was 3.30 [95% CI – 3.20 – 3.39], indicating a moderate quality of life. After controlling for confounding, strong evidence ($p \leq 0.001$) of a decrease in QoL scores was found for those who: felt isolated from the HIV community, -0.40 [95% CI: -0.59, -0.20]; experienced stigma in the last 12 months, -0.35 [95% CI: -0.55, -0.15]; and had difficulty accessing specialist (non-HIV) services, -0.31 [95% CI: -0.50, -0.12].

Conclusion: We found that QoL among older PLHIV is associated with accessibility of social services, social connectedness, and experience of stigma. Our findings provide early insights into the experience of people ageing with HIV which can be built on and used to inform policy.

Disclosure of Interest Statement

The Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis & Sexual Health Medicine recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations

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