

# From treatment support to quality of life:

POSTER  
#269

# Re-imagining the role of the NAPWHA Treatment Outreach Network

B. Clifton<sup>1</sup>, N. Mackellar Stewart<sup>1</sup>, A. Ogier<sup>1</sup>, J. Rule<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Association of People Living with HIV Australia, Newtown, Australia

The NAPWHA Treatment Outreach Network (TON) has operated for over twenty years. During that time the HIV treatments landscape has changed fundamentally: As treatments have become simpler and easier to take, this has resulted in less demand from clients for treatment advice and support.

As a peak organisation, NAPWHA works with our membership of State and Territory-based PLHIV organisations and have refocused on broader health and wellbeing, including: promoting wellness and quality of life, mental health, housing, employment, and education, among others.

In this environment NAPWHA sought to explore alternative arrangements for provision of HIV treatment information to and by its member PLHIV organisations.

## How does the TON operate?

The TON has consistently held two annual face-to-face meetings. Organisation representatives have attended to varying degrees depending on their own work commitments, organisational support and geographic location.

The content of these meetings have varied but have always included jurisdictional reports from organisational representatives which have included information about:

- **HIV epidemiology** including information relating to local HIV cascade characteristics.
- **The range of HIV treatment and emerging issues in care inquiries** across frontline client services and the information and advice provided in response.
- **Broader client service presentation issues**, such as, housing, employment, access to care, immigration, stigma and discrimination.

The meetings have included sessions and presentations relating to specific topics and challenges in the treatments/care and support space. These have been delivered by a range of experts in the field, these have included clinicians, government HIV-related project managers, researchers, and health promotion workers.

## What's been the changing environment in which TON operate?

HIV drugs and their therapeutic use have changed fundamentally over the past twenty years. Significant changes include, that they:

- **Are recommended for all people with HIV** regardless of age, gender and immune status.
- **Have become simpler** with fewer side effects with better tolerability, and are more potent with faster time to viral suppression.
- **Have higher genetic barriers to drug resistance**
- **Are free** for some Australian jurisdictions.

The result for health promotion staff in member organisations has arguably meant that that the content, number and complexity of HIV drug issue inquiries reduced over time.

### Disclosures

The Treatment Outreach Network has been supported by funding from the Australian Department of Health in partnership with the National Association of People Living with HIV Australia.

The Treatment Outreach Network (TON) is a formal collaboration of HIV community sector professionals working together to optimise the overall wellbeing of people living with HIV, by provide high standard of information and care on issues of health and treatments for HIV.



TON's role is to provide consistent, up-to-date information to State-based HIV organisations and to enhance the HIV treatment knowledge of HIV community sector professionals.

NAPWHA project staff are responsible for convening the network and utilise a range of partnerships to ensure the aims of the network are met.

## Reorienting the TON: What we did & the outcomes

NAPWHA surveyed community organisations to collect data on: client needs and how these are met; numbers of staff and the type of staff engaged in HIV treatments education; views on how treatments information might be delivered in future; and workforce development and service standards to support this vision.

A consultant analysed the findings and presented options for future engagement.

### Results from the survey showed:

Treatments information is no longer focused solely on medication, interactions, and side effects, but now encompasses broader issues affecting the experience of HIV care, including ageing, immigration, stigma, and social issues (alcohol and other drugs, housing, etc). Injectable antiretroviral therapy and the treatments 'pipeline' were identified as relevant topics for workforce development.

This initiative is the first survey of treatments information provision in the past decade. It represents an opportunity for HIV community organisations and HIV care providers to consider and respond to the changing context and experiences of HIV care and peer support.

TON still holds two meetings a year and has adopted a hybrid approach by hosting one meeting a year online enabling greater participation, and one in person. The TON membership has also expanded to accommodate new HIV sector roles such as HIV Peer Navigators. TON meetings focus on a mix treatments information with broader health and wellbeing topics now included. TON members are consulted around the topics they wish to focus on and meeting presentations are recorded and hosted on the NAPWHA website and shared to members for greater reach.

**ARVs and weight gain**

Who is most at risk of weight gain?

- Why is weight gain greater in black race and females?
- Some hypothesise that African-Americans as a race do not want to lose weight (gaining weight is "healthy" – cultural issue)
- Genetic predisposition
- CYP2B6 genotype polymorphisms enriched in black race ancestry

CYP2B6 slow and intermediate metabolizers on EFV had significantly slowed weight gain

Similar weight gain for CYP2B6 extensive metabolizers receiving EFV or DTG + FTC/TDF

In this presentation to the Treatment Outreach Network, Professor Jennifer Hoy – Director HIV Medicine at Department of Infectious Diseases, The Alfred, presents a version of [What is known about weight gain on INSTI-based regimens?](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE PRESENTATION SLIDES](#)

Pictured: TON meetings focus on a mix treatments information with broader health and wellbeing topics now included.

<https://napwha.org.au/treatment-officer-network-2021/>

**Cognitive health for people living with HIV**

Cognitive aging in PLHIV: is it HIV or simply aging?

Current evidence

In this presentation to the Treatment Outreach Network, Associate Professor Lucette A. Cysique – Senior Researcher and Neuropsychologist at St Vincent's Hospital Centre for Medical Research (Sydney, NSW) presents an overview of an emerging research area for **Cognitive Health for People living with HIV**

[WATCH ON YOUTUBE](#)

[DOWNLOAD THE PRESENTATION SLIDES](#)

Pictured: Presentations are recorded and hosted on the NAPWHA website and shared to members for greater reach.

<https://napwha.org.au/treatment-outreach-network-2022/>

**napwha** national association of people with HIV australia

Presented at the Joint Australasian HIV&AIDS Conferences #HIVAIDS22 #SH22

**hiv&aids+ sexualhealth** 2022