

FIFTY AND POSITIVE: FINDINGS FROM HIV FUTURES 9 ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AGED 50 YEARS

Power, J¹, Norman, T¹, Rule, J², Lyons, A¹, Johnson, J¹, Hill, A¹, Bourne, A¹

1. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University
2. National Association of People With HIV Australia

Background: The average age of the population of people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Australia is now around 50 years. Ageing with HIV presents complexities with respect to managing ageing-related health conditions alongside HIV. However, less is known about the impact of ageing with HIV on mental health and quality of life, an issue we explore in this paper.

Methods: HIV Futures 9 was a cross-sectional, self-reported survey of adults living with HIV in Australia (N=847). Data were collected in 2018/2019 via a questionnaire completed online or in hardcopy. Quality of Life (QoL) and general wellbeing was measured using the PozQoL scale and the SF36 general wellbeing subscale. Descriptive and bivariate analysis were used to compare mental health of different age groups and to identify factors associated with poorer mental health.

Results: The median age of participants was 51 years. People aged between 50-64 years were less likely than those in both older and younger age groups to report good QoL, less likely to feel socially connected and had higher rates of diagnosed mental illness. Although people aged 65+ reported a greater number of co-morbidities, those in the 50-64 age group reported poorer general health and greater financial and housing insecurity than older people. Lower social connectedness and financial insecurity were associated with poorer mental health.

Conclusion: People aged 50-64 may be too young to access support through aged care programs and may not have the level of functional impairment required for home care or other supports. However, these findings suggest that people in this age group may need extra support with respect to mental health care and financial security. There is need to develop policy and health services within and beyond the HIV sector to support this group.

Disclosure Of Interest: This project is wholly funded by the Australian Department of Health. Jennifer Power and Anthony Lyons have previously received funding from ViiV healthcare. No authors have a conflict of interest to declare.