

Communication and integration of information for people living with HIV in Northern NSW: A qualitative study of the patient perspective

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Background

- People living with HIV (PLHIV) are living longer and require more complex, holistic care to manage comorbidities
- In Northern NSW, approx. 500 people engage with HIV care, primarily delivered through specialist HIV services, with variable engagement with GPs for primary care
- Adequate communication and coordination between HIV specialists and GPs is crucial in delivering safe, effective care
- We explored the perspectives of PLHIV on the coordination of their care, and how their healthcare providers communicate, as patient perspectives in this area are lacking.

Methods

- Participants were PLHIV and were recruited from Northern NSW Sexual Health Services
- Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted February to March 22, reimbursement of \$30 provided
- Schedule developed by HIV specialists in consultation with PLHIV and covered perspectives on care, with a focus on care coordination and communication
- Interviews were manually transcribed, coded inductively using NVivo, with reflective discussion to elicit themes
- Thematic analysis was performed to explore perspectives on communication and care coordination

Results

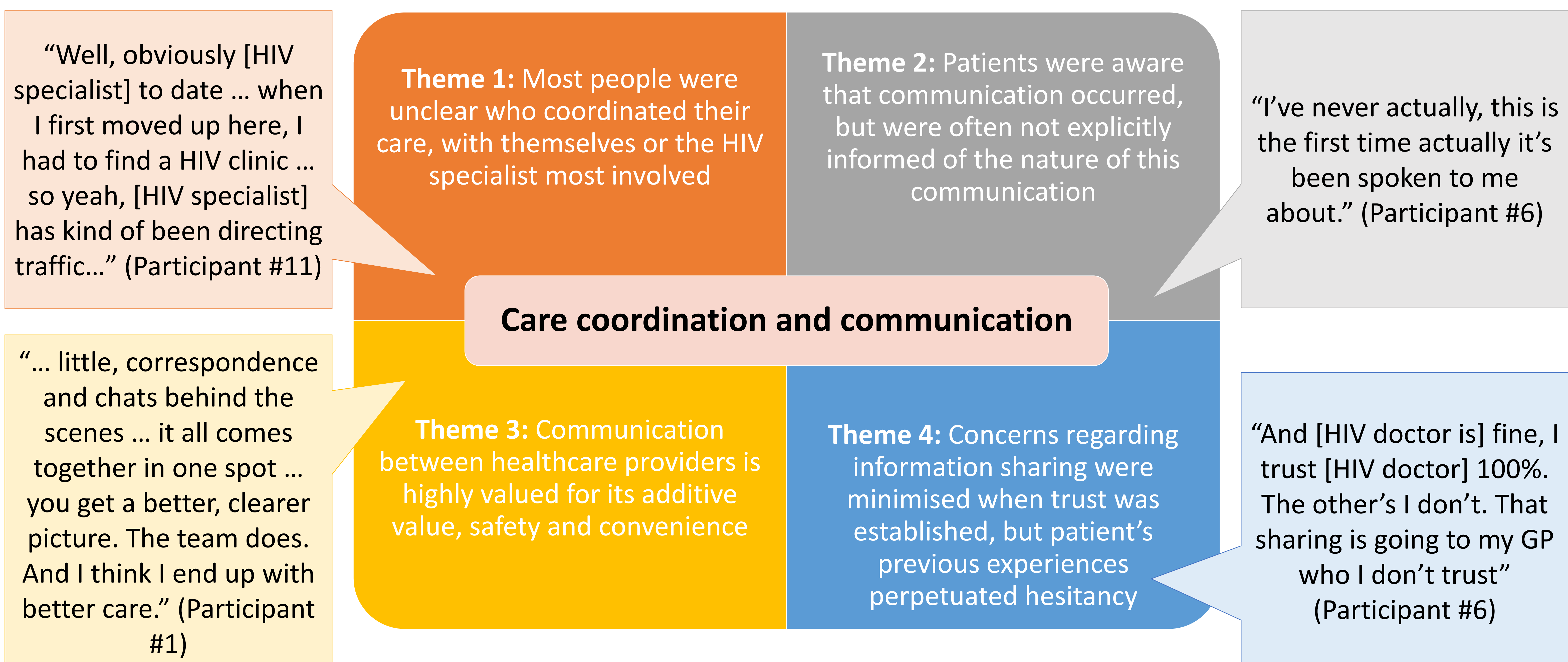
Patient Demographics

- 13 participants were interviewed (11 M, 1 F, 1GD)
- Age ranged from 50-70 years old
- 11/12 participants had been living with HIV > 10 years
- 10/13 participants had lived in Northern NSW > 10 years

Themes. Fig 1.

1. Patient understanding of care coordination
2. How their healthcare providers communicate
3. Value of care coordination and communication
4. Hesitancy in information sharing

Figure 1: Themes elicited with representative quotes



Conclusions and Implications

- Participants recognised the importance of care coordination and communication, supportive of inter health care professional communication
- There is a lack of clarity around who coordinates care, and how healthcare teams communicate, which is a risk to patient safety and quality of care
- Hesitancy in communication was entrenched in some patients' distrust of healthcare due to previous experiences of confidentiality breaches and stigma
- Patient support for communication may be strengthened by improving trust in the people and systems involved
- Clarity of care provider roles and coordination of care, potentially through structured care plans, will improve care for PLHIV

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