

EMBEDDING QUALITY OF LIFE INTO HIV NURSING ASSESSMENT – CASE STUDY OF A COMMUNITY NURSING SERVICE IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

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Background:

We report on the development of a new HIV assessment tool within a community nursing service.

Coinciding with the introduction of a new electronic health record, the HIV team in a community nursing organisation developed a new assessment tool for people living with HIV at home or experiencing homelessness. In line with the goals of the 8th National HIV Strategy, we embedded a quality-of-life assessment (PozQuol) within.

Approach:

The HIV Team Clinical Nurse Consultants developed the assessment following review of national and international evidence-based tools. Its implementation was approved by the organisation.

The assessment contains links to other validated tools. It is designed to be used by the HIV specialist nurses alongside other general assessments.

Key domains include:

- HIV exposure history, understanding of diagnosis, links to resources
- Contact tracing/partner notification
- Immigration status
- CD4 count and viral load (chart to monitor change).
- Medical history including HIV-related conditions
- History of viral hepatitis, vaccination
- Sexual health
- Mental health, cognition
- Substance use
- General health – eyes, hearing, dental, pain
- Medications
- Education, counselling, peer support needs
- Social history – especially re homelessness
- Legal issues
- International HIV Dementia screen, 2 item depression screen, Poz Quol.

Outcomes:

Since the finalisation of the assessment tool in 2020, all HIV clients undergo the assessment upon admission to the service. Longer term clients undergo the assessment upon review. To date, the HIV Team has completed approximately 80 assessments including PozQuol.

Innovation and Significance:

The HIV nursing assessment developed within this community nursing organisation facilitates comprehensive nursing assessment by specialist nurses whilst linking into

broader organisational assessments to enable holistic and responsive care planning for clients living with HIV.

Embedding the PozQuol tool within the assessment contributes to monitoring and evaluation of the program. Furthermore, it enables evaluation of the impact of community nursing supports for people living with HIV on quality of life.

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