

Ageing well with HIV: Factors associated with improved quality of life for people living with HIV aged 50 years and over in Australia.

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Background, Aim & Methods

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 and the factors associated with quality of life in this group.

Aim:

1. Describe quality of life among people living with HIV over the age of 50 (PLHIV50+) in Australia.
2. Quantify the relationship between quality of life and three selected factors of difficulty accessing to specialists, experience of stigma and feelings of isolation from the HIV community using cross-sectional regression analysis.

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 over the age of 50.
- QoL was measured using PozQoL, a validated QoL scale for PLHIV. Responses range between 1–5 across 13 items (higher scores indicating higher QoL).
- Predictors were coded as binary variables (Yes/No) with a recall period of “In the last 12 months have you...”
- Mean total PozQoL score was the primary outcome for analysis. A multiple linear regression model was fitted estimating the associations between three selected factors and quality of life, adjusting for confounding.

Univariate Analysis

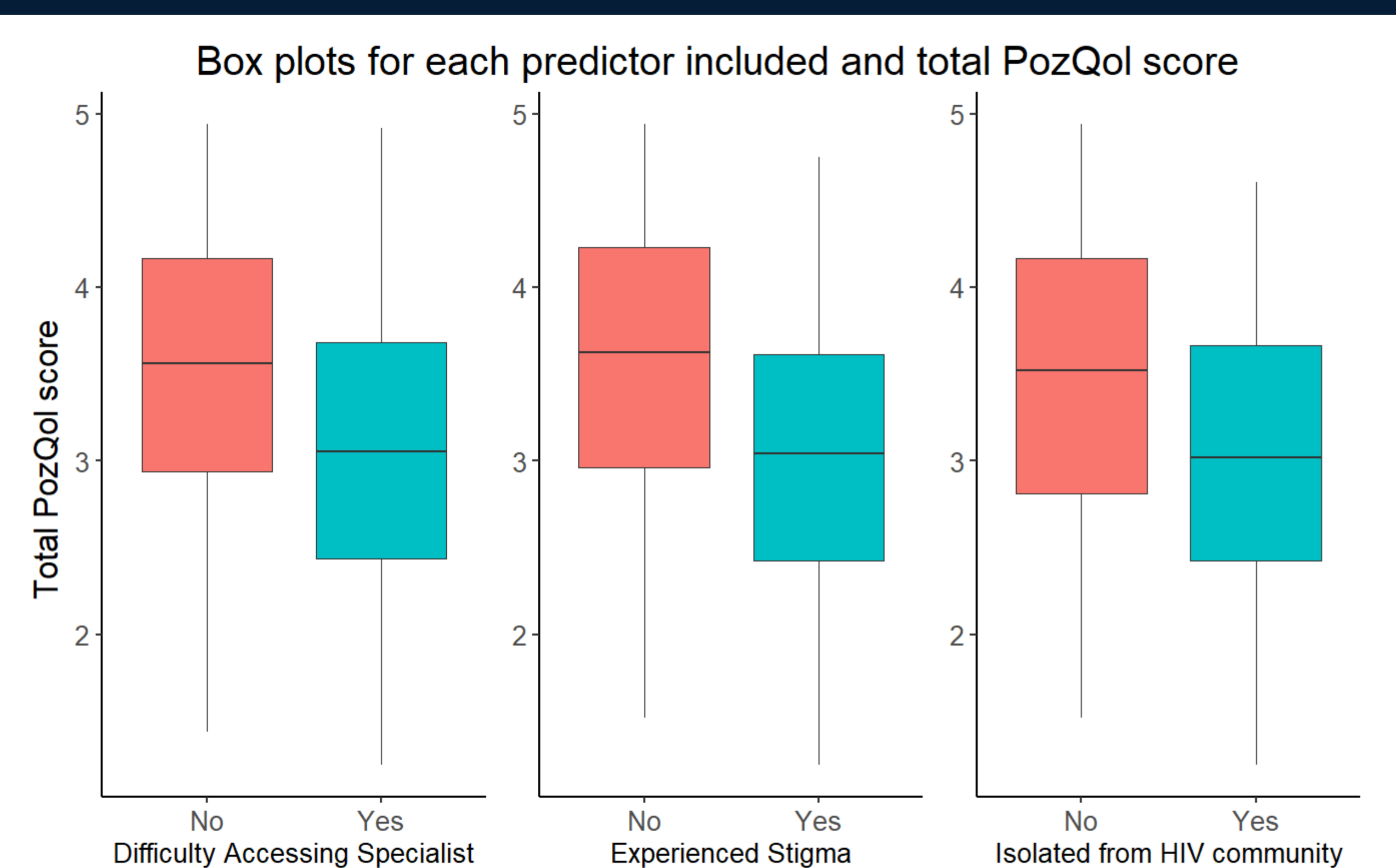


Figure 1. Univariate descriptive analysis of quality of life across each predictor included in regression model.

Key Findings



- Mean total QoL score for PLHIV was 3.30 [95% CI – 3.20 – 3.39], indicating a *moderate* quality of life.
- 319 participants aged 50+ years were included in the analysis.
- Adjusted estimates demonstrated strong evidence that QoL was lower among PLHIV who:
 - **Had difficulty accessing specialist (non-HIV) services by -0.36 [95% CI: -0.54, -0.18], p<0.001);**
 - **Experienced stigma in the last 12 months by -0.39 [95% CI: -0.58, -0.20], p<0.001;**
 - **Felt isolated from the HIV community by -0.39 [95% CI: -0.58, -0.20], p<0.001**

Discussion & Conclusion

- Overall, the mean quality of life score for people living with HIV was moderate, suggesting quality of life could be improved among this group.
- Difficulty accessing specialists, experiences of stigma, and isolation from the HIV community are all associated with lower quality of life among PLHIV50+.
- These three factors demonstrate three areas that could be targeted by interventions or services to improve the wellbeing of PLHIV50+.
- Understanding the unique risk factors faced by an aging population of people living with HIV is critical to ensuring that health and support systems are available and allocated appropriately.

