

PEER NAVIGATION: EXPERIENCES THROUGH THE LENSES OF MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

Authors: Mutch A¹, Fitzgerald L¹, Howard C², Istiko S², Khalpey Z¹, Hannan K, Dean J¹

¹ The University of Queensland

² Queensland Positive People

Background: Peer navigators (PNs) use shared lived experience to assist people recently diagnosed with HIV to build and strengthen their engagement with health systems and social supports. Emerging evidence suggests peer navigation programs (PNP) are effective, but little is known of the broad experiences of all stakeholders (clients, PNs and s100 GPs), or how they negotiate roles and relationships to support PLHIV.

Methods: The PN evaluation study provides data from the first Australian, community-based PNP run by Queensland Positive People (QPP). This study involved four stages of data collection, including baseline and post program surveys and three phases of in-depth, face-to-face interviews with key stakeholders (20 PNP clients, 16 PNs, 6 s100 prescribers) living across Queensland. This presentation reports on results from in-depth interviews with all stakeholders to consider their experiences of PN and the roles and relationships forged through the PNP.

Results: All stakeholders saw PNs as an integral part of the 'patient support network' providing essential supports (e.g. practical, emotional and informational), and assisting PLHIV to negotiate barriers to care. Across the interviews, peers were described as playing a powerful role in 'normalizing' the experiences of living positive. Stakeholders negotiated a range of working relationships, but most likened the PN role to a 'bridge' between client and care, providing a medium through which clinical information could be translated. Timely referral and access from general practice to PN remains a key challenge for a community-based PNP.

Conclusion: This study contributes to the growing understanding of the role of PNs in the care of PLHIV from the perspectives of clients, PNs and GPs. The results demonstrate how all stakeholders must be engaged to ensure timely, effective and coordinated care. Importantly, the presentation provides insights that can inform the delivery of PNPs across Australia

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