

Women living with HIV in Australia: development of a clinical monitoring tool to address gender-specific care gaps

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Background

- Women living with HIV (WLHIV) experience a complex intersection of reproductive health needs, age-related comorbidities, mental health conditions, and psychosocial challenges often unaddressed by their HIV clinicians
- Our clinical audit identified such care gaps in the routine management of WLHIV attending our service in 2021-2022; some key findings in table

Health indicator screened for in prior 12 months	Number of patients (%)
Alcohol intake	12/27 (44.4%)
Smoking history	13/27 (48.1%)
BMI	14/27 (51.9%)
Partner/family violence	8/27 (29.6%)
In women age ≥45 years:	
Menopause status	9/13 (69.2%)
Menopause symptoms	4/13 (30.8%)
Absolute cardiovascular disease risk	2/13 (15.4%)
FRAX score or BMD scan	0/13 (0%)
Cognition	0/13 (0%)

Aim

- To develop an evidence-based practical reference tool to support clinicians managing WLHIV in Australia

Methods

- We collaborated with ASHM to develop a clinical reference tool
- The existing *ASHM HIV Monitoring Tool* was adapted to include extra sections on reproductive health, psychosocial aspects, links to useful reproductive health resources and peer support organisations for WLHIV in Australia
- Recommendations are based on current international HIV guidelines from Canada, UK, USA, Europe; and Australian primary care guidelines from the Royal Australian College of Practitioners, Cancer Council Australia, Australian Immunisation Handbook
- Input from multidisciplinary stakeholders, including WLHIV in Australia (National Network of Women Living with HIV)

Reproductive Health Hx

- + Pregnancy/obstetric Hx
- + Fertility desire
- + Contraception Hx
- + Menstrual Hx
- + Menopause status & Sx
- + Breast & cervical screening Hx

Psychosocial Hx

- + Country of origin/residence
- + Employment, finances, housing, social priorities
- + Family, carer status, support system
- + Medicare & Visa status
- + Sex work & safety
- + Domestic/Family Violence screening

BOX 1: RH resources

- [Cancer Council cervical screening for immunosuppressed](#)
- [Cancer Council breast screening](#)
- [ASHM HIV infant feeding guidelines](#)
- [Pregnancy and HIV guidelines](#)
- [UK FSRH Contraception for WLHIV](#)
- [Greene Climacteric Scale](#)
- [Aus Menopause Society](#)
- [ASHM Decision Making in Contraception resource](#)

Results: a few key sections of the tool

HIV Monitoring Tool for Women

BOX 2: Domestic and Family Violence screening

Preamble: Violence is very common in the home. No one should have to live in fear of their partner, ex-partner or family members.

Ask:

1. How are things at home?
2. Do you feel safe at home?
3. Has your partner, ex-partner or family members ever physically threatened or hurt you?
4. Are you ever afraid of your partner, ex-partner or family members?



Scan for tool

Conclusion

- This tool will support HIV clinicians provide holistic patient-centred care for WLHIV in Australia

Psychosocial	Social, financial & welfare ¹	+	Every visit	Counselling, treatment, referral
	Psychological morbidity ¹	+		
	Domestic and family violence	+	As indicated	Enquire if clinically indicated [§] (box 2)
Sexual and Reproductive Health	Partner status, disclosure, contact tracing ¹	+	6-12 months (as relevant)	U=U, TasP. Testing partner, children, consider PrEP for partners if relevant
	Sexual function	+		Counselling, treatment, referral
	Menstrual Cycle	+		Assess for abnormal bleeding and Ix/Refer as appropriate
	Preconception	+		Assess pregnancy intentions in next 12 months; provide preconception care or contraception counselling as required
	Contraception	+		Contraception review (Refer to Decision Making in Contraception resource)
	Menopause	+	Annual	>40 years: Assess menstrual cycles, use validated menopausal symptom screening tool (Refer to Greene Climacteric Scale)