

HIV peer navigator and nursing partnerships in care for people growing older with HIV

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Background:

By 2027, the largest population living with HIV in Australia will be aged 50–55 years. Many are living with HIV and other chronic conditions, often navigating fragmented health and aged-care systems, as well as HIV-related stigma, social isolation and financial hardship. While Australia has a strong and well-developed peer navigation program, integration with clinical services remains inconsistent. Meaningful collaboration between HIV peer navigators and nurses, who make up 57% of the health workforce, remains patchy with the role of peers undervalued and underutilised in many settings. In this talk, we present roundtable research that aimed to develop person-centred and sustainable approaches to care for older adults living with HIV by leveraging the combined strengths of peer navigators and nurses.

Methods:

A national roundtable was convened in May 2025 to unite nine HIV peer navigators, eight nurses and eight other professionals with expertise in stigma, service navigation, HIV, ageing and peer work. A mix of short presentations and case studies were used to stimulate multidisciplinary discussion exploring participants' perspectives on innovative approaches to enhancing collaboration between peers and nurses across services to improve integration of care.

Results:

The roundtable generated data on perceived barriers to collaboration at interpersonal and system levels, as well as opportunities and strategies to overcome these barriers by strengthening dialogue and referral pathways between HIV peer navigators, nurses and wider multidisciplinary health professional teams. Findings will inform scalable, cost-effective care models applicable in diverse practice settings. We also identified shared goals and priorities for future research and policy to develop person-centred, collaborative service navigation frameworks.

Conclusion:

This roundtable underscored the value of peer navigators and nurses partnering to bridge the clinical/community divide and deliver equitable and integrated care. It sets the foundation for sustained collaboration and innovation in Australia's response to HIV and ageing.

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