

Understanding the root causes of HIV-related stigma among the Australian general public

Timothy Broady¹, Elena Cama¹, Loren Brener¹, Aaron Cogle², Carla Treloar¹

¹ Centre for Social Research in Health, UNSW

² National Association of People with HIV Australia

napwha national association of
people with HIV australia

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Background

HIV-related stigma and discrimination is a significant issue throughout society

- Little progress being made towards stigma reduction targets

What drives stigmatising attitudes and negative behaviour towards HIV?

Root causes of stigma

1. Concealability
 - Can it be hidden?
2. Persistence
 - How long will it last?
3. Disruptiveness
 - Does it prevent social interactions?
4. Aesthetic qualities
 - Does it invoke a disgust response?
5. Origin
 - How did it start?
6. Peril
 - Is it dangerous to others?

Jones, E. E., Farina, A., Hastorf, A. H., Markus, H., Miller, D. T., & Scott, R. A. (1984). *Social stigma: The psychology of marked relationships*.

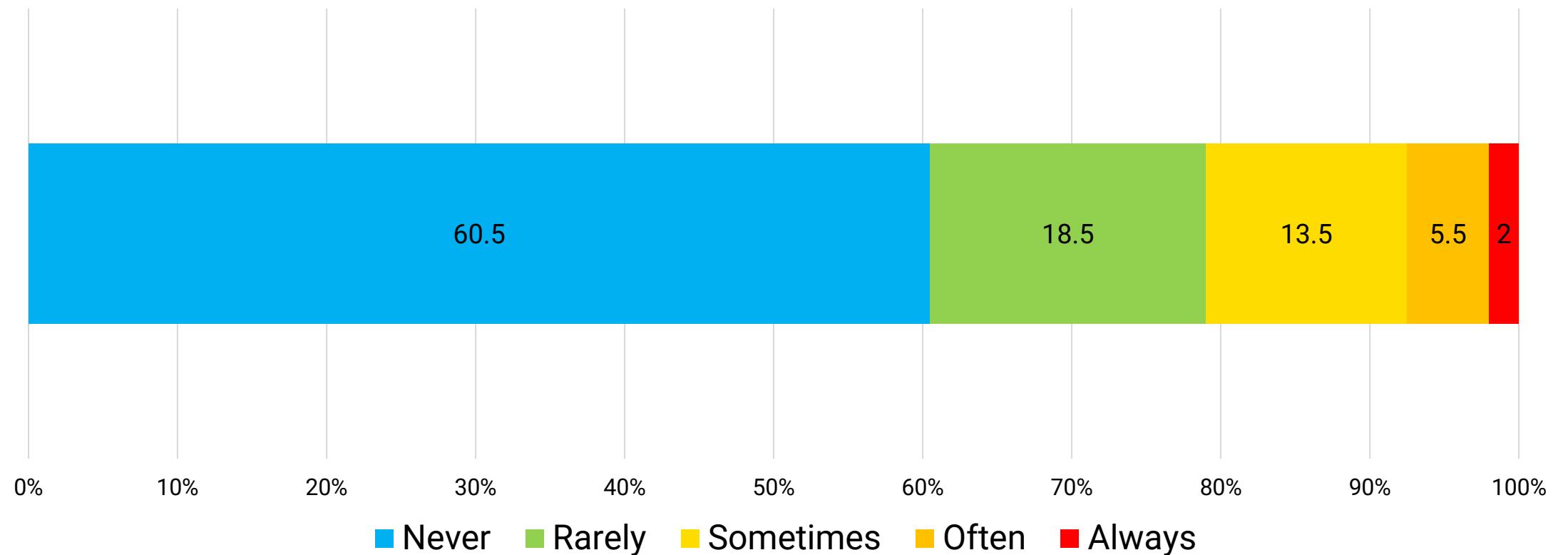
Method

Online survey of Australian public (n=400)

- Gender:
 - 52% female
 - 47% male
 - <1% non-binary
- Average age: 43 years
- 20% born overseas
- 87% heterosexual

Results

Would you behave negatively towards other people because of their HIV?



Results

Behaving negatively towards PLHIV associated with:

- **Concealability**
 - “PLHIV should always disclose their HIV status”
- **Origin**
 - Blaming PLHIV for acquiring HIV
 - Less compassion for PLHIV
- **Believing other people would behave negatively towards PLHIV**
- **Male gender**

Conclusion

Interventions to reduce HIV-related stigma

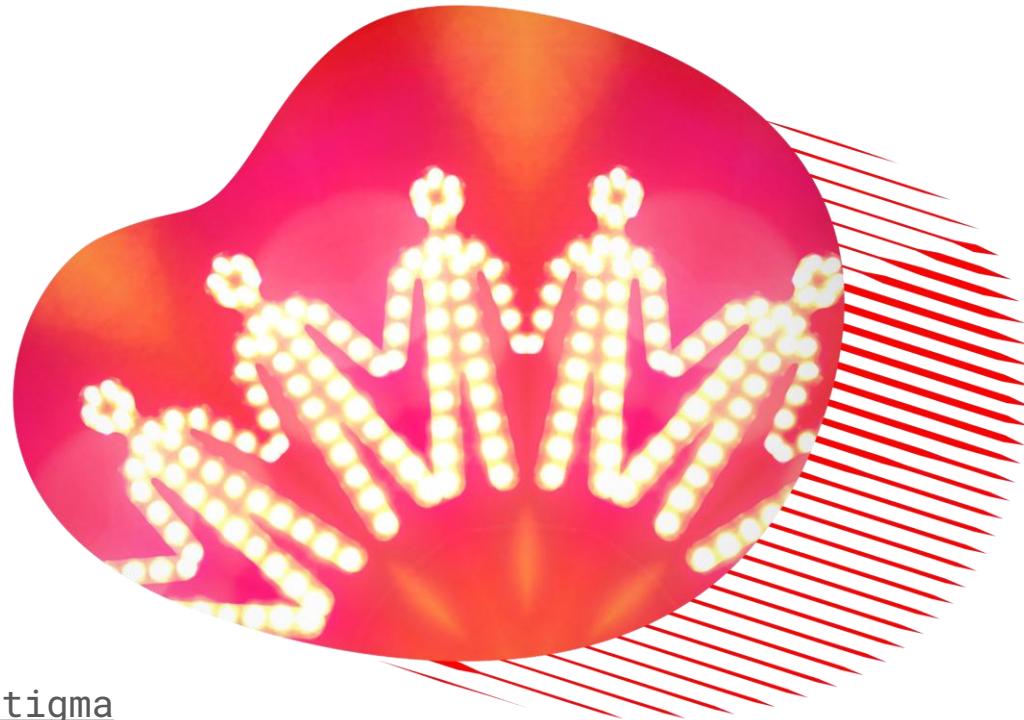
- Consider how to tackle blame
- Challenge the need to always disclose
- Misperceptions of other people's attitudes

Tackling Stigma Conference

UNSW Sydney
November 2026

Abstracts and registrations to open March 2026

<https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/csrh/tackling-stigma>



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Combating Stigma

Strategies for Inclusive Health Services