

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

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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*.

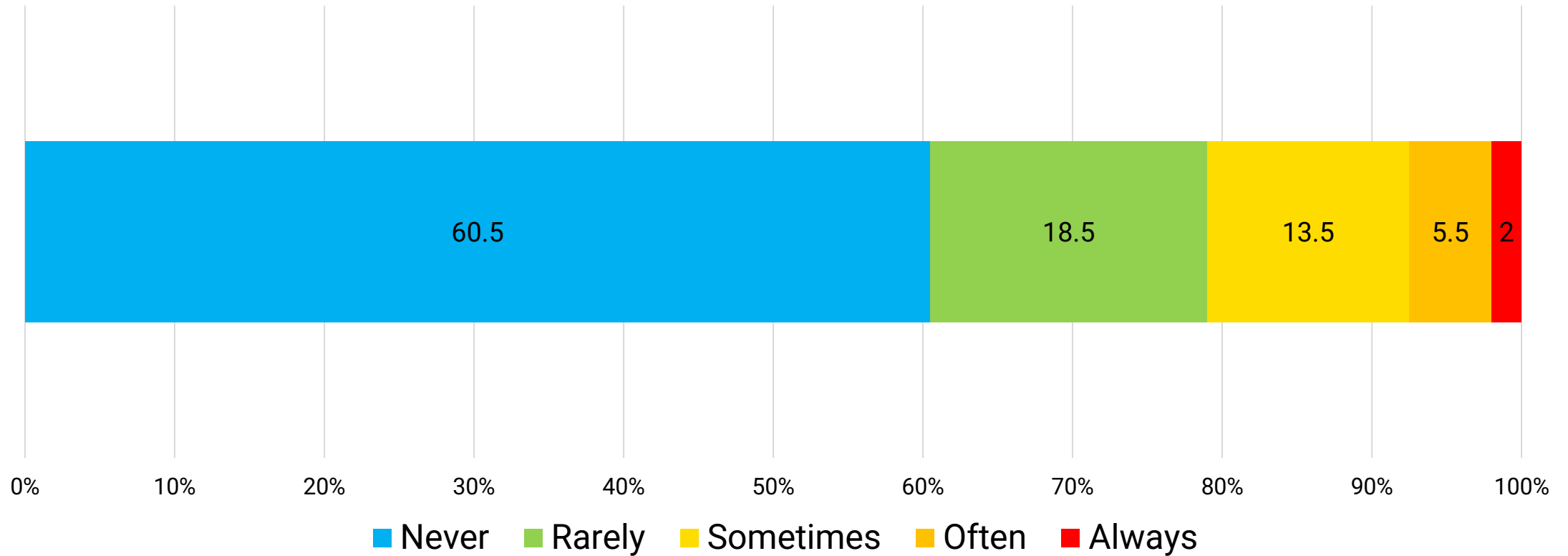
# Method

## 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

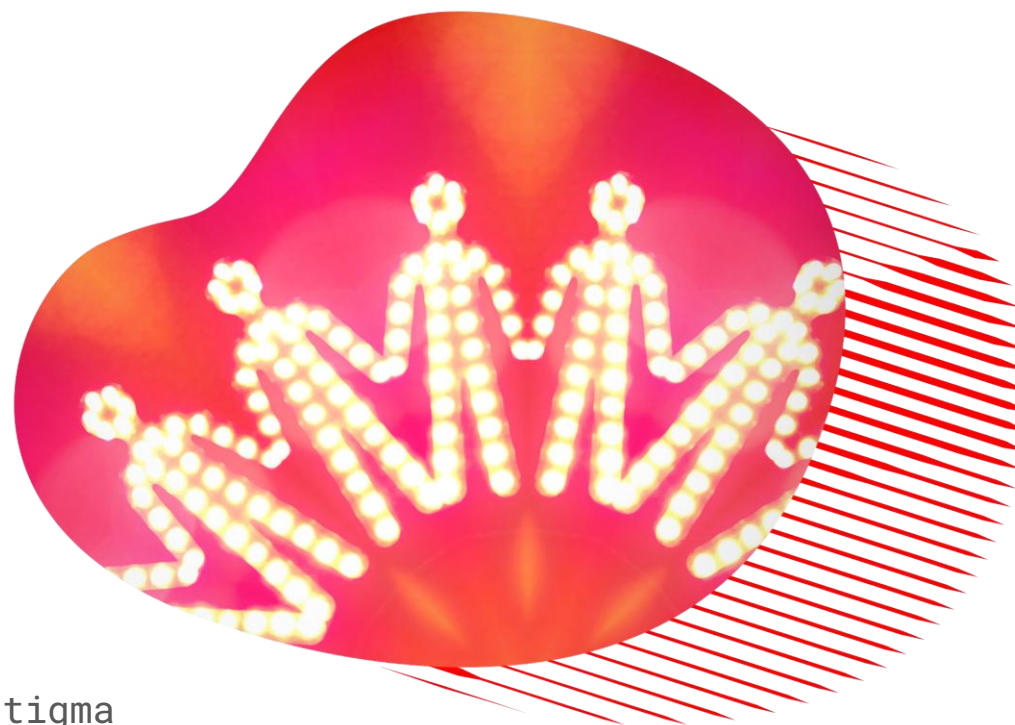
- Consider how to tackle blame
- Challenge the need to always disclose
- Misperceptions of other people's attitudes



# 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

