

PLHIV community engagement: Linking GIPA principles with quality of life

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Background:

This project assesses Queensland Positive People's (QPP) utilisation of a greater involvement of people living with HIV (GIPA) approach by investigating people living with HIV's (PLHIV) self-reported assessment of engagement and quality of life (QoL).

Methods:

Over 6 weeks, 171 survey responses were received from PLHIV (95% sampling confidence with a 7.7% margin of error). Researchers conducted interviews with nine PLHIV handpicked for their diverse perspectives and completed three agency feedback sessions. The project examined the degree and quality of QPP's engagement with 17 diverse sub-populations, with an emphasis on enabling and disabling factors affecting involvement. It utilised an internationally validated QoL tool (PozQoL) which assessed the psychological, social, health and functional domains which was cross-referenced with the agency engagement data.

Results:

Results indicate a significant proportion of Queensland PLHIV struggle with loneliness, social isolation and stigma. Findings suggest PLHIV are eager for peer support to increase the social and psychological aspects of their QoL. Many respondents expected QPP to deliver such programs. PLHIV in regional areas and those under the age of 18 appear to experience greater barriers to agency engagement.

PLHIV with lower QoL scores were critical of QPP's engagement practices and service provision. The PozQoL social domain score in this study is the lowest of any Australian jurisdiction and significantly lower than the health and functional domains. Concerningly, 84% (n= 145) indicated that they fear rejection based on their HIV status, with 49% (n=71) 'very' or 'extremely' worried about this.

Most of the sample was recruited through QPP, while government/non-government partners contributed few or no respondents.

Conclusion:

The findings support the literature that social support has a direct correlation with positive health outcomes. This project demonstrates that agencies can use the GIPA principles and QoL indicators as a mechanism for service quality improvements and advocacy.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

There is no disclosure of interest with this work.