Supporting self-management for people recently diagnosed with HIV:
A social network lens

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No conflict of interest to declare

Managing HIV: A Social Network Context

- HIV has evolved from a life-threatening infection to a chronic manageable condition[1]

- Managing a chronic condition is often framed in terms of practicing good 'health behaviours'

- Self-management is a collective process

- Social networks contribute to improving outcomes for people with chronic conditions[2]

1. Dean, J., et al. (2014). "The evolution of HIV education for nurses in Australia." Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care 25(5): 458-464.
2. Vassilev, I., Rogers, A., Kennedy, A., & Koetsenruijter, J. (2014). The influence of social networks on self-management support: A metasynthesis. *BMC Public Health, 14*(1).

Research Aims

To explore recently diagnosed people living with HIV understandings and experience of support

To examine how personal support networks evolve following HIV diagnosis.

To highlight the range of people, places and services that are important in supporting self-management of health according to people diagnosed with HIV in Queensland today.

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Stage 1:

The HIV Testing to Treatment Trajectory in Queensland Study

- Diverse sample (n=40)

- Queenslanders recently diagnosed with HIV (<5 years)
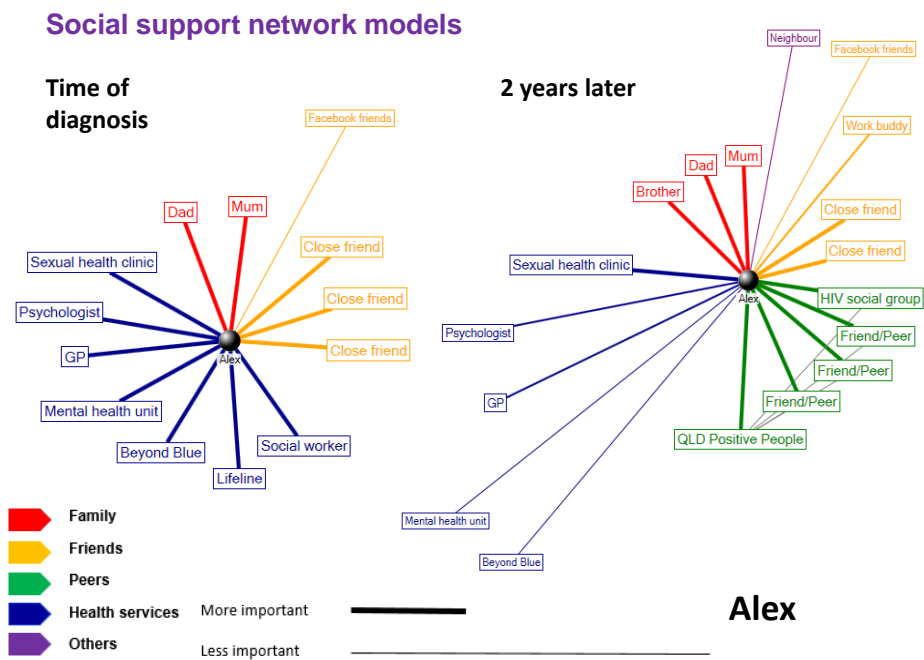
- In depth interviews and thematic analysis
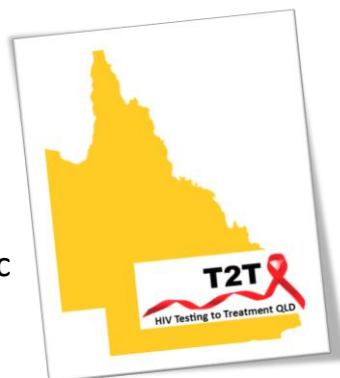
Exploring the lived experience of HIV testing, diagnosis and treatment in Queensland today

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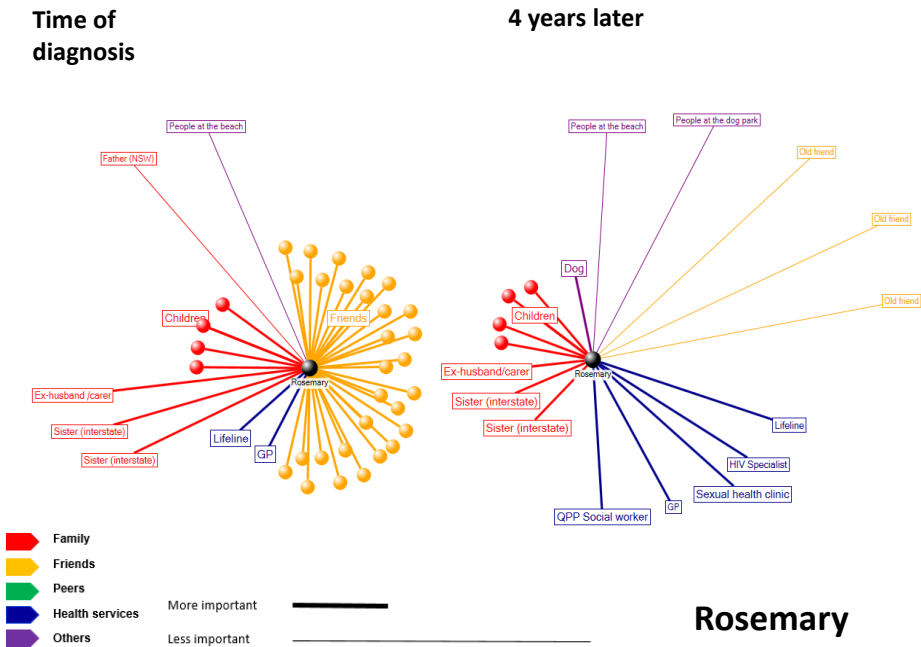OF QUEENSLAND
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Stage 1 Findings

Understandings of support in the context of HIV diagnosis

- A safety net
- Meaningful connections
- Promoting physical and mental health
- Validating HIV positive status
- Encouraging personal growth and progression

Social support network models

Time of diagnosis | 2 years later

Legend:
- Family (red)
- Friends (orange)
- Peers (green)
- Health services (blue)
- Others (purple)

More important — Less important

Alex

Time of diagnosis

4 years later

Rosemary

Legend:
- Family (red)
- Friends (yellow)
- Peers (green)
- Health services (dark blue)
- Others (purple)

More important — (thick line)
Less important — (thin line)

Stage 2 findings: The strength of diverse networks

- The diversity of ties was more important than the number

- Those who could talk to family and friends about HIV relied on them as important supports.

- Health care providers continued to be vital long-term supports when people could not turn to family or friends.

- Navigating social networks to seek support is an important aspect of HIV self-management

The strength of peer networks

- Peers helped strengthen existing support networks

- They could offer meaningful support at different times from diagnosis to self-management

- Peers were a bridge between 'clinical' and 'everyday' worlds

- Peer support is often mutual

- Peers could share lived experience of 'managing' social networks to seek support

Summary:

In the chronic disease era:

- People are self-managing HIV in different social contexts

- Formal support services remain pivotal for people who are socially isolated

- Personal support networks are dynamic and changing

Recommendations:

- Formal healthcare teams should be expanded to include peers

- Both formal and informal peer support networks must be promoted

- Strong, diverse and sustainable support networks are vital to managing HIV for life

Thank you

The T2TQ participants
(names are changed to protect anonymity)

HIV Foundation QLD

Research partners

APA Scholarship

Supervisors
Dr Lisa Fitzgerald
Dr Judith Dean
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