

# Intersectional stigma among migrant women from sub-Saharan African communities living with HIV in Australia

Collins Adu, Carla Treloar, Loren Brener, Timothy Broady



**Collins Adu**

Centre for Social Research in Health,  
UNSW Sydney

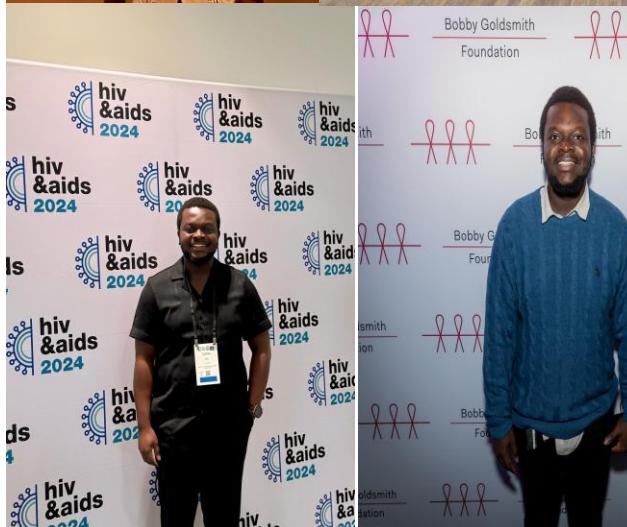


# Disclosure of interest statement

The UNSW, Sydney, Faculty of Arts, Design, and Architecture provided HDR Essential Costs of Research funding for this study.



# EMBRACING THE JOURNEY



# Why This Research Matters

- ❖ The Australian Government has identified migrants from SSA communities as a priority population in its Ninth National HIV Strategy (2024-2030), highlighting the urgent need for targeted research (Australian Government, 2024).
- ❖ From 2019 to 2023, the proportion of late HIV diagnoses was high among people born in SSA (King et al., 2024).
- ❖ Stigma related to HIV and race/cultural backgrounds is an issue for ethnically diverse people living with HIV in Australia (Ziersch et al., 2021).



# Methods



Semi-structured interviews among 10 black migrant women from sub-Saharan African communities living with HIV in NSW

Interviews were conducted via face-to-face and video-recording conferencing platforms

UNSW Sydney, Human Ethics Committee (iRECS6310)

Thematic analysis guided by three theoretical frameworks (stigma, acculturation and modified social ecological model)



UNSW  
SYDNEY

# Findings



# Race and migrant identity



This theme reflected participants' feelings of "otherness" and racial prejudice associated with being black SSA migrant women and living in Australia

“Oh, my goodness, it is tough. It is really tough. One thing to remember is that especially people from SSA often experience stigma, whether you are HIV-positive or not. We do experience stigma all the time because of our skin colour. On top of that, this is someone with HIV” (Married, 50 years)



# Gendered experiences

*This theme explored how participants felt judged for their HIV status, which was perceived as a failure to adhere to traditional social roles*

“I couldn’t breastfeed my baby. The system [the culture in Australia] understands that... Unlike back home, the fact that my baby had to be formula-fed. Then I have to do a lot of explanation, which I might not want to disclose my status” (Married, 34 years)



# Immigration and policy impacts



This theme captured how visa-related uncertainties exacerbate feelings of instability

“I got the news, as an HIV positive person, I might not get my permanent residency... when I got the news, I felt the stigmatisation like I am still being stigmatised because I am HIV-positive” (Married, 34yrs)



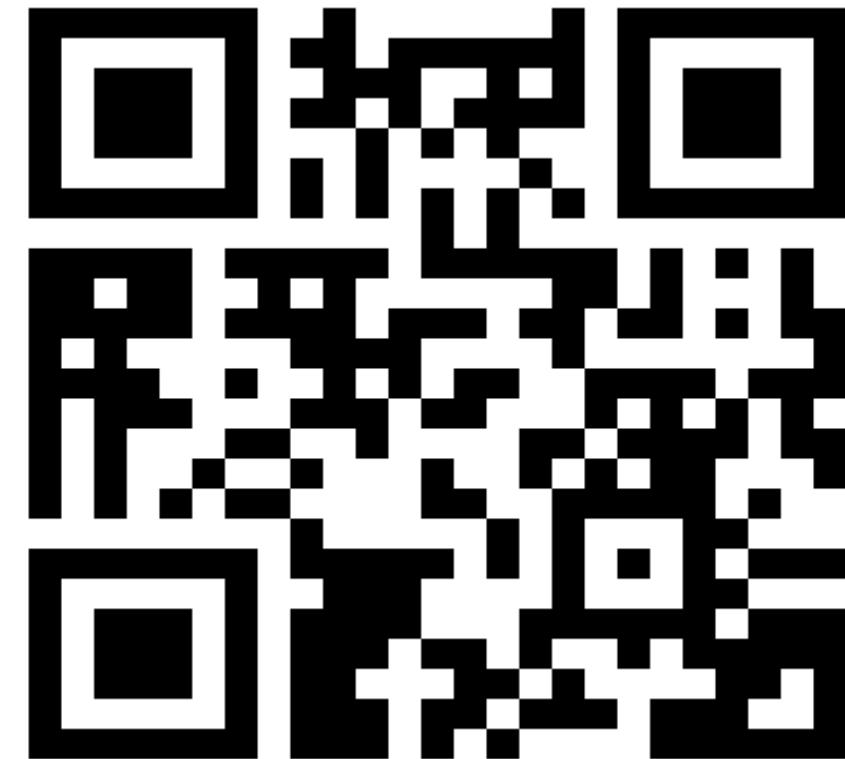
# Conclusion

- Migrant women from SSA living with HIV face stigma that is not singular, but layered across gender, race, culture, and immigration status.
- Reducing intersectional stigma requires culturally responsive care and policies that amplify their voices.
- Addressing stigma is not only about better health, but it is about dignity, equity, and justice.



# Thank You / Contact Info

A large, colorful word cloud centered around the word "thank you" in various languages. The word "thank" is in blue, "you" is in yellow, and "you" is in red. The word cloud includes "thank you" in English, as well as many other languages: German (danke), Chinese (謝謝), Turkish (teşekkür ederim), Spanish (gracias), French (merci), Italian (grazie), Portuguese (obrigado), Russian (спасибо), Polish (dziękuje), Korean (감사합니다), and many others. The words are in different colors and sizes, creating a dense and colorful composition.

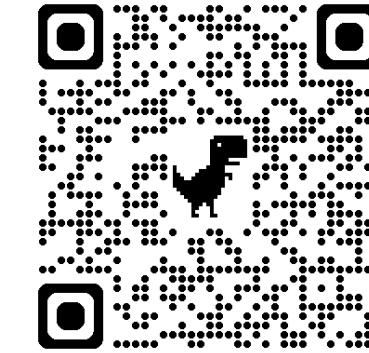
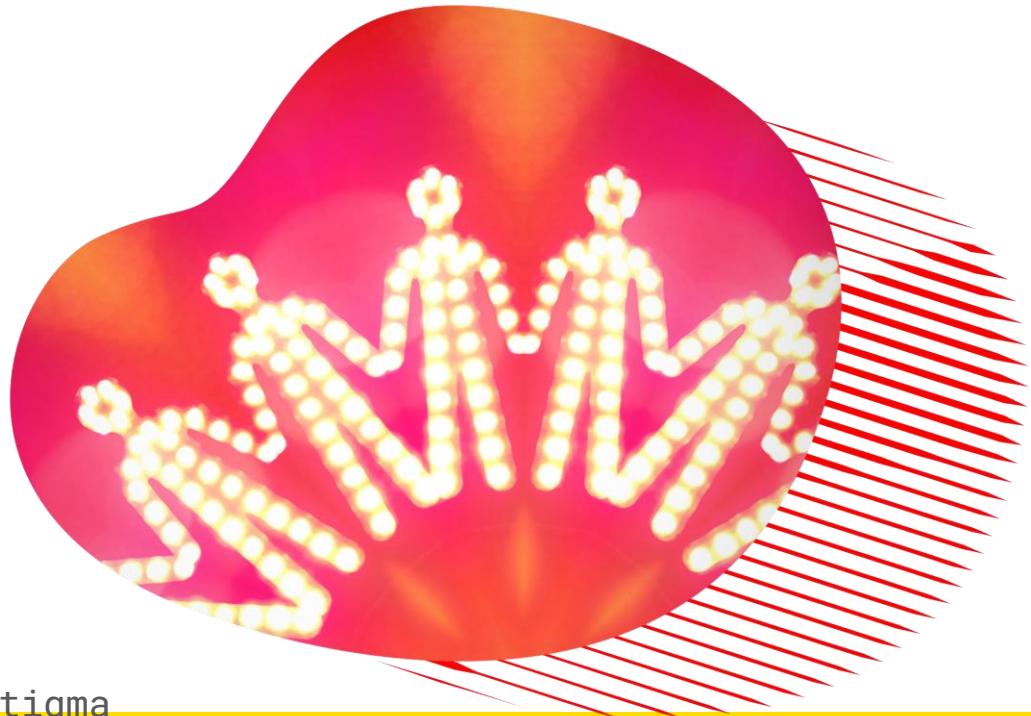


# Tackling Stigma Conference

UNSW Sydney  
November 2026

Abstracts and registrations to open March 2026

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



UNSW  
SYDNEY



CSRH

UNSW

Centre for  
Social Research  
in Health