

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

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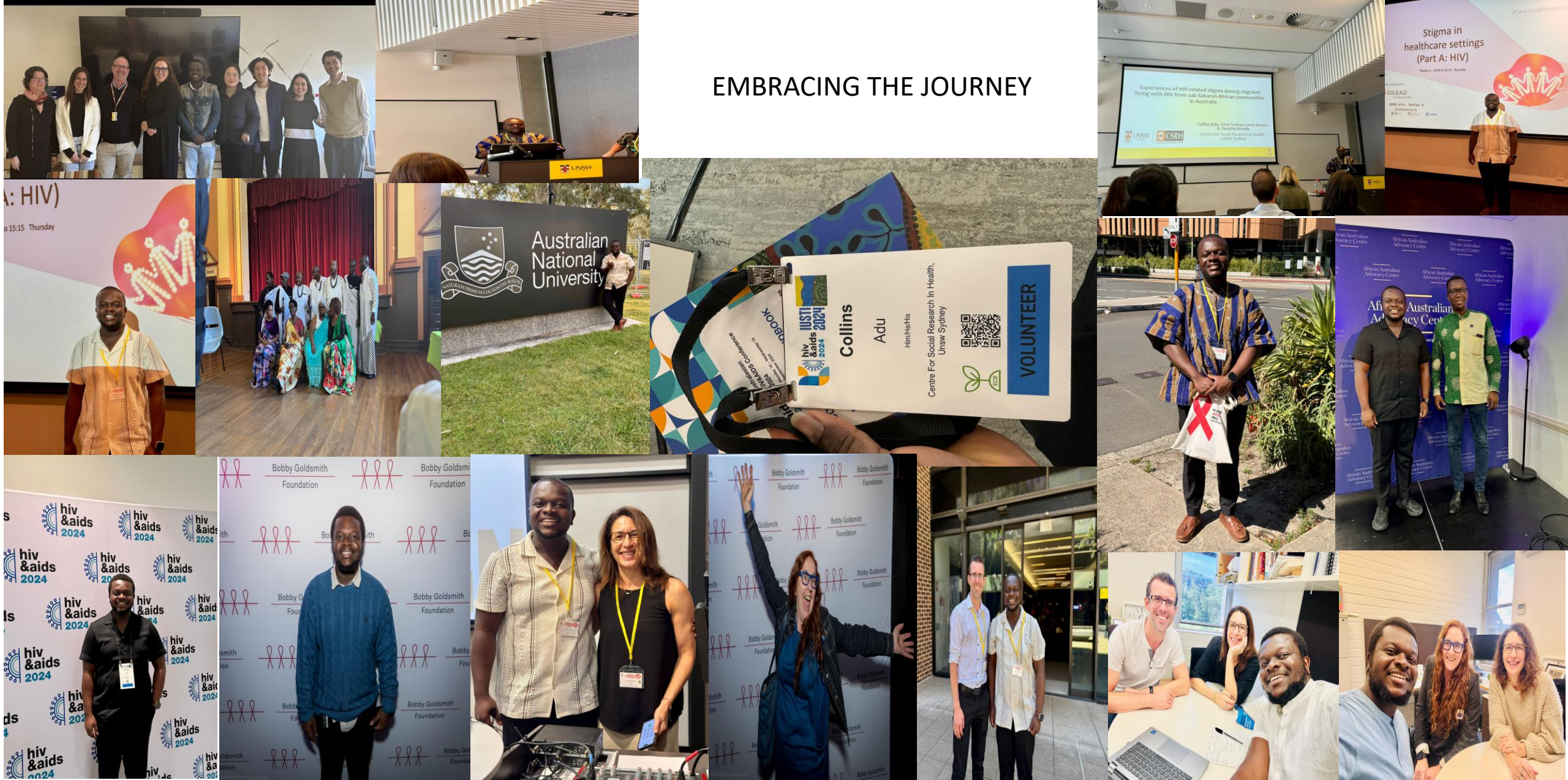


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Disclosure of interest statement

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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)

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



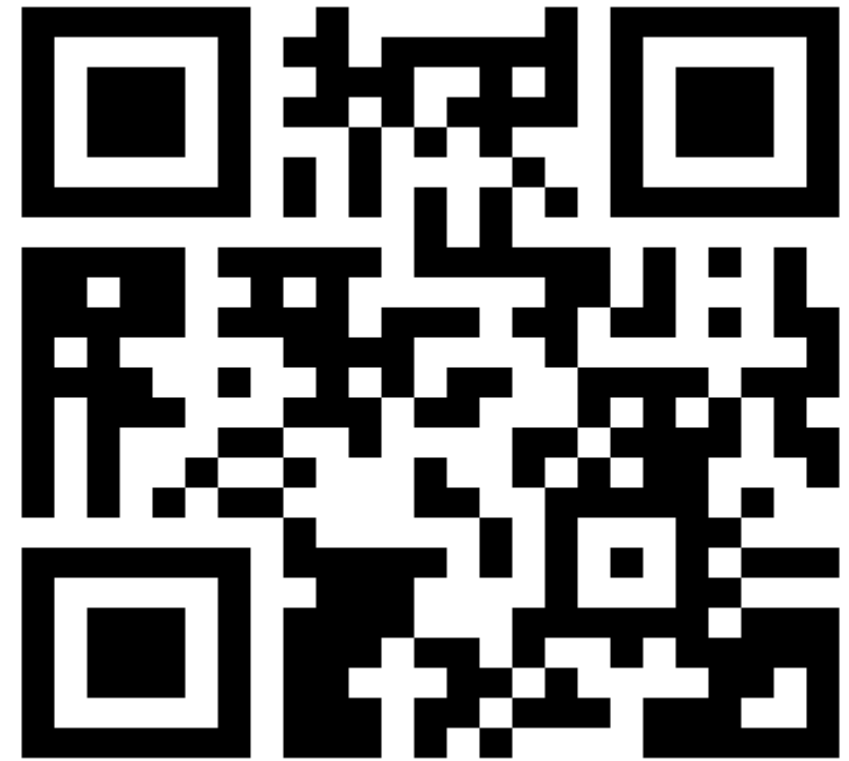
This theme captured how visa-related uncertainties exacerbate feelings of instability

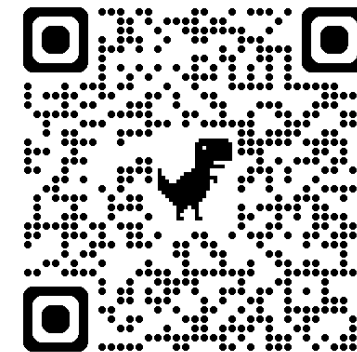
“I got the news, as an HIV positive person, I might not get my permanent residency... when I got the news, I felt the stigmatisation like I am still being stigmatised because I am HIV-positive” (Married, 34yrs)

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.

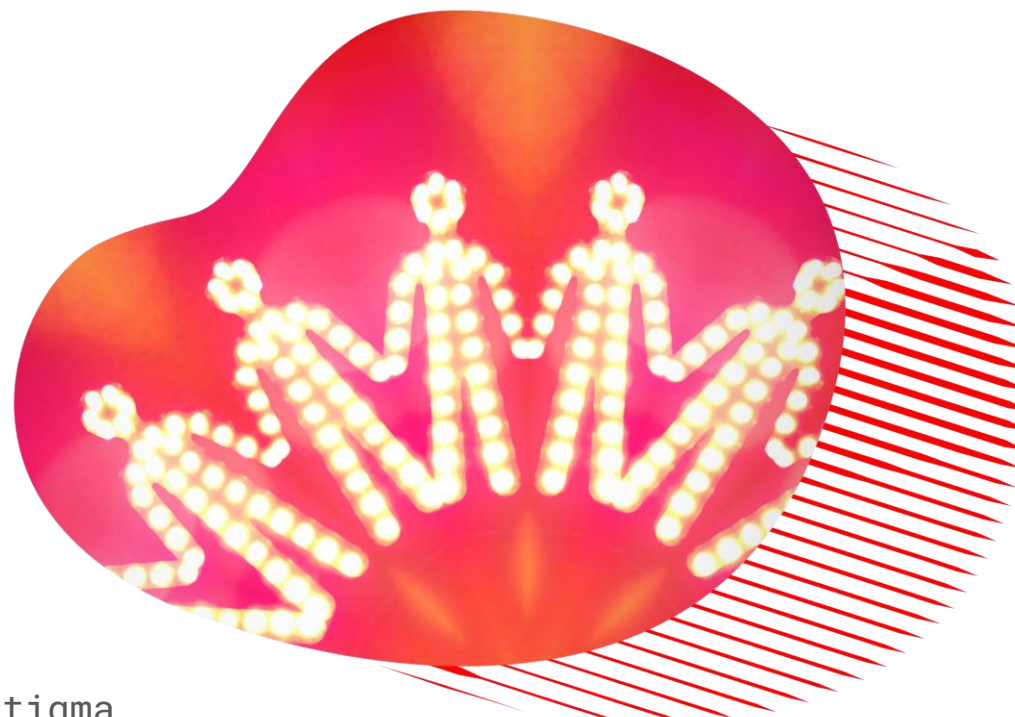
Thank You / Contact Info





Tackling Stigma Conference

UNSW Sydney
November 2026



Abstracts and registrations to open March 2026

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