

Monitoring the health of women living with HIV: a clinical audit of service delivery against national guidelines in a regional Australian sexual health clinic.

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Background/Purpose:

Women living with HIV (WLHIV) face unique health challenges and increased risk profiles in reproductive health and age-related comorbidities. This audit compared service delivery at the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Sexual Health Service (ISLHD SHS) against the Australian Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM) HIV Monitoring Tool for Women.

Approach:

A retrospective audit was conducted of patients identifying as female and living with HIV who were reviewed by a sexual health clinician in the previous 12 months. Medical records between September 2023 to September 2025 were reviewed. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics to measure adherence to the ASHM monitoring tool domains.

Outcomes:

27 participants were included with ages ranging from 24 to 88 (M = 50 years); 41% were Australian-born and 96% had an undetectable viral load. Patients were routinely asked about their menstrual cycle and pregnancy-intention; however, preconception counselling was rarely documented (16%). Of the participants that required menopause assessment, 68% were not asked about symptoms and only one formal assessment tool was utilised. Most participants were up to date with cervical screening (82%), but only 40% were up to date with breast cancer screening. Risk assessments were not routinely used, with 70% lacking cardiovascular disease risk assessments (CV Risk), and 53% lacking bone health (FRAX) assessments.

Significance:

Translating best-practice guidelines into routine care remains a challenge. This audit identified several service delivery gaps, including the underutilisation of validated screening tools. In response, ISLHD SHS implemented templated documentation, to improve the routine assessment of pregnancy intent and the systematic use of screening tools including the Greene Climacteric Scale, cardiovascular risk, FRAX, and cancer screening.

The ASHM HIV Monitoring Tool for Women ensures comprehensive healthcare delivery to WLHIV, and sexual health services nationwide should implement the tool to ensure alignment with best practice.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None.