

Are we ready?

HIV knowledge and attitudes among staff in aged care facilities

Australasian HIV & AIDS Conference

Adelaide, Australia

15-17 September 2025

Regan Gilchrist, Margaret Pickles, Andrew Gray,
Helen Harcombe, Lorraine Ritchie, Raewyn Lesa,
Sue McAllister



**University
of Otago**

ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

Acknowledgements:

Study participants and local aged care sector

Jane Bruning, National Coordinator, HIV Positive Women Aotearoa Inc.

Funding: University of Otago Research Grant

No disclosure of interest

Background:

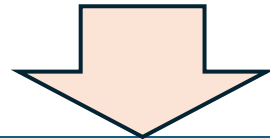
- More people living with HIV and potentially requiring support from the aged care sector
- Stigma against people living with HIV, including within healthcare settings – but little is known specifically about the aged care sector

How ‘ready’ is the aged care sector?

Study aims:

Amongst aged-care staff, to describe:

1. Knowledge about HIV
2. HIV related stigma
3. Key factors associated with knowledge and stigma



To inform policy and the development of future interventions in the aged care sector

Methods:

- Aged residential care (ARC) facilities and their healthcare workers in one region of New Zealand
- In-person visit to ARC facilities for recruitment
- Survey questionnaire following consent (June-August 2024)

Analysis

- Descriptive (n, %), mean scores
- Multiple imputation and regression models accounting for clustering within facilities

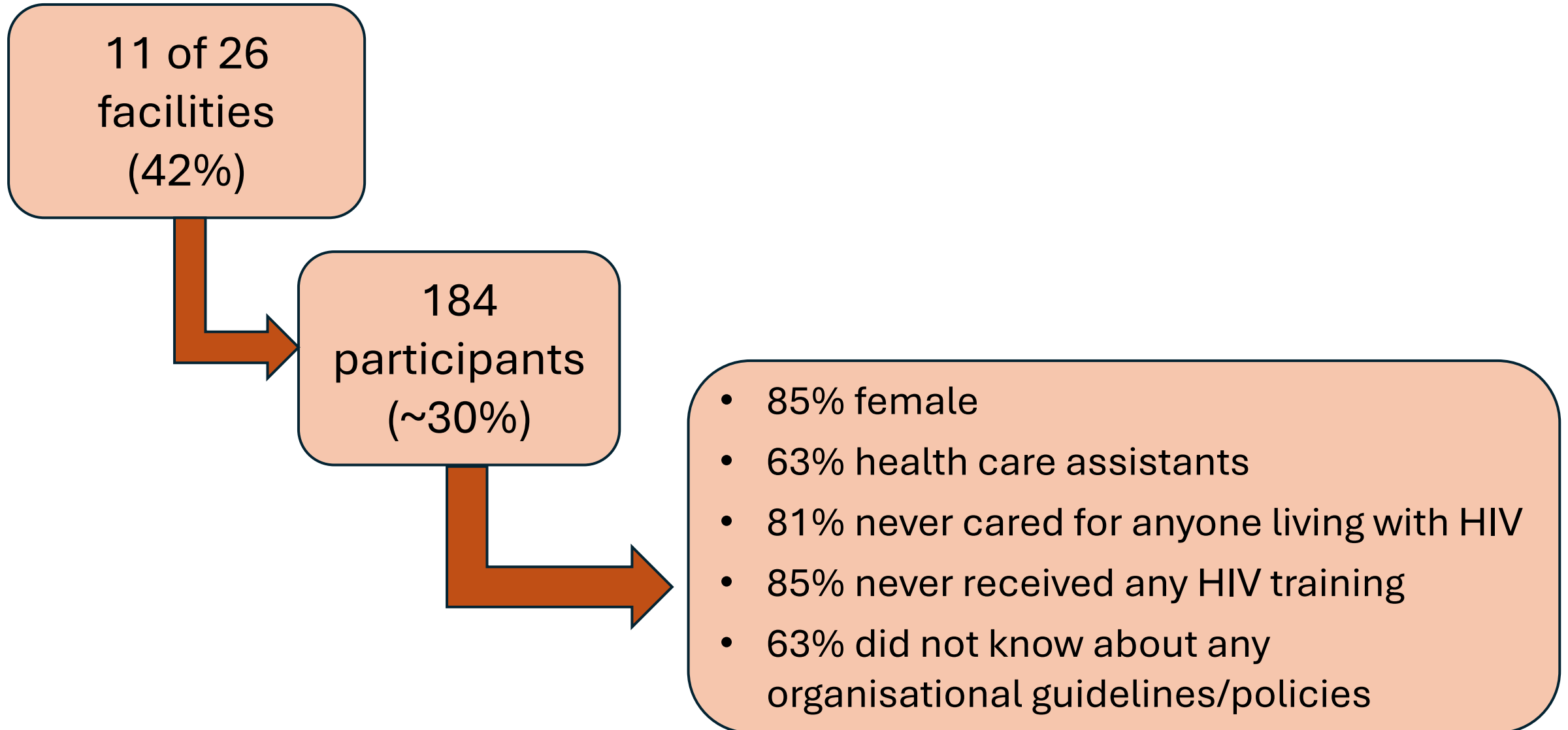
Survey questionnaire:

- Knowledge scale (13 questions) ➔ Score 1 (low) to 13 (high)¹
- Health care provider HIV and AIDS Stigma Scale (30 statements) ➔ Stigma score 30 (low) to 180 (high)²
- Level of worry (4 questions) ➔ Worry score 4 (low) to 16 (high)
- Demographic characteristics

1. Adapted from Carey et al. AIDS Educ Prev 2002; 14(2): 172-82

2. Adapted from Wagner et al. AIDS Behav. 2014; 18(12): 2397-2408

Study participants



Knowledge

A person cannot get HIV by sharing a glass of water with someone who has HIV

87.0%

A person cannot get HIV by sitting in a hot tub or swimming pool with a person who has HIV

77.7%

There is a very low risk of getting HIV if a person is taking PrEP as prescribed

39.7%

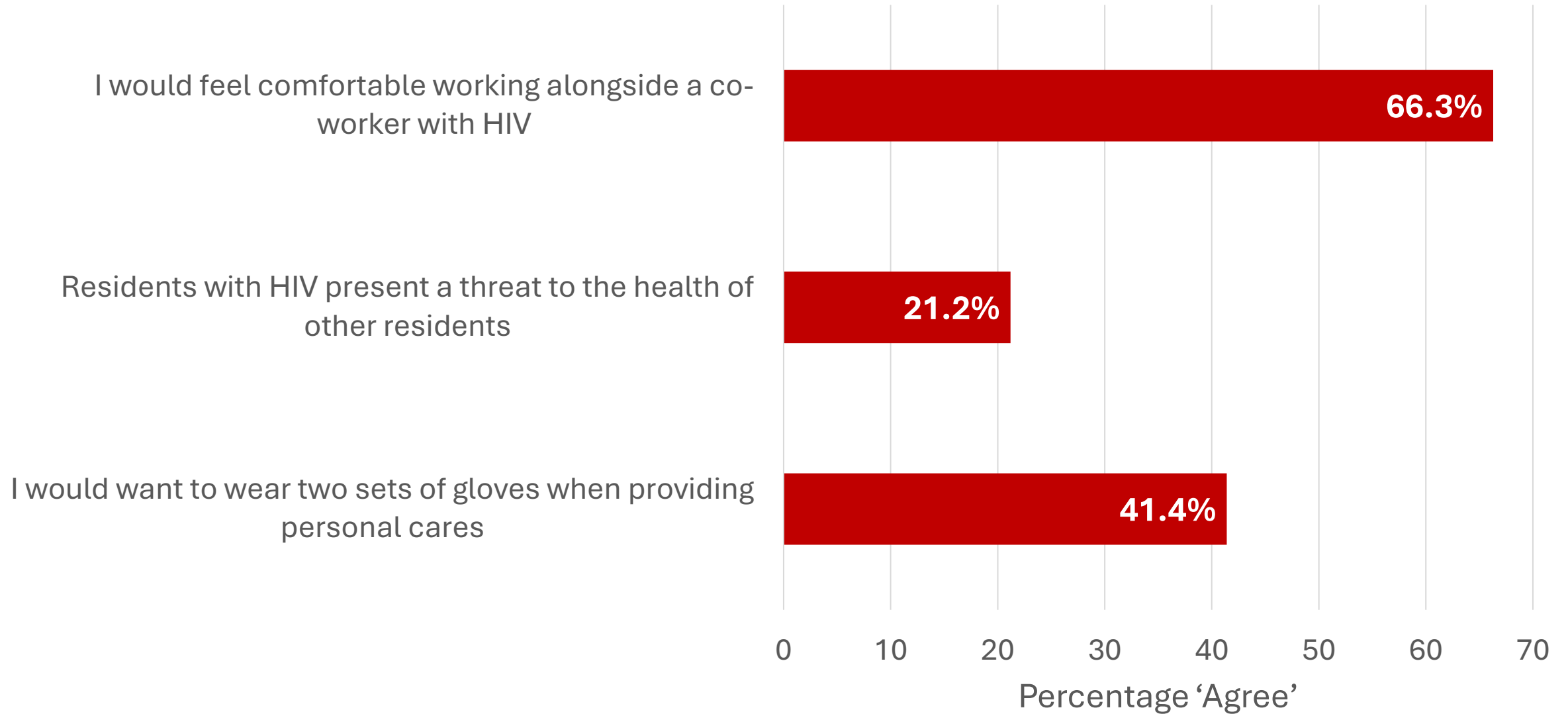
There is a medication that can be taken to prevent getting HIV

37.0%

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

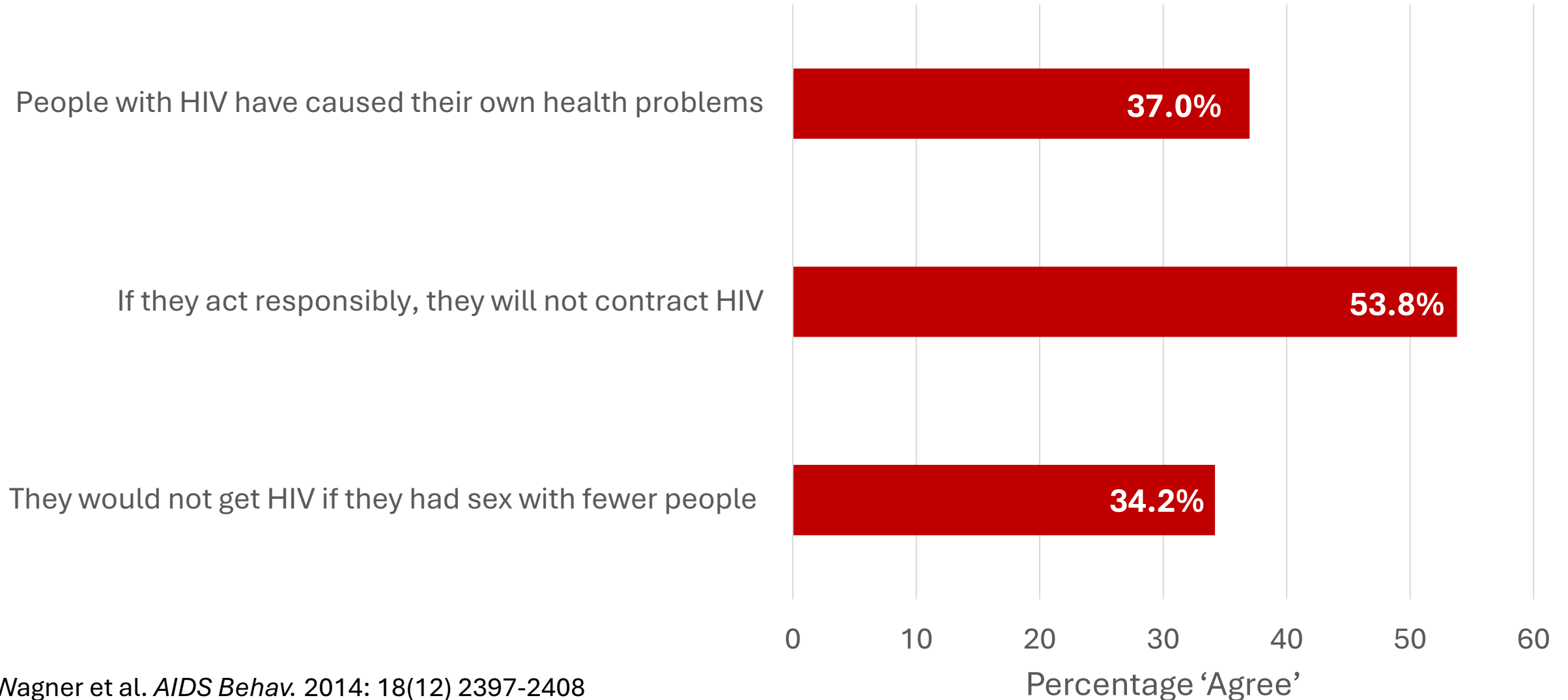
Percentage correct

Stigma: prejudice statements*



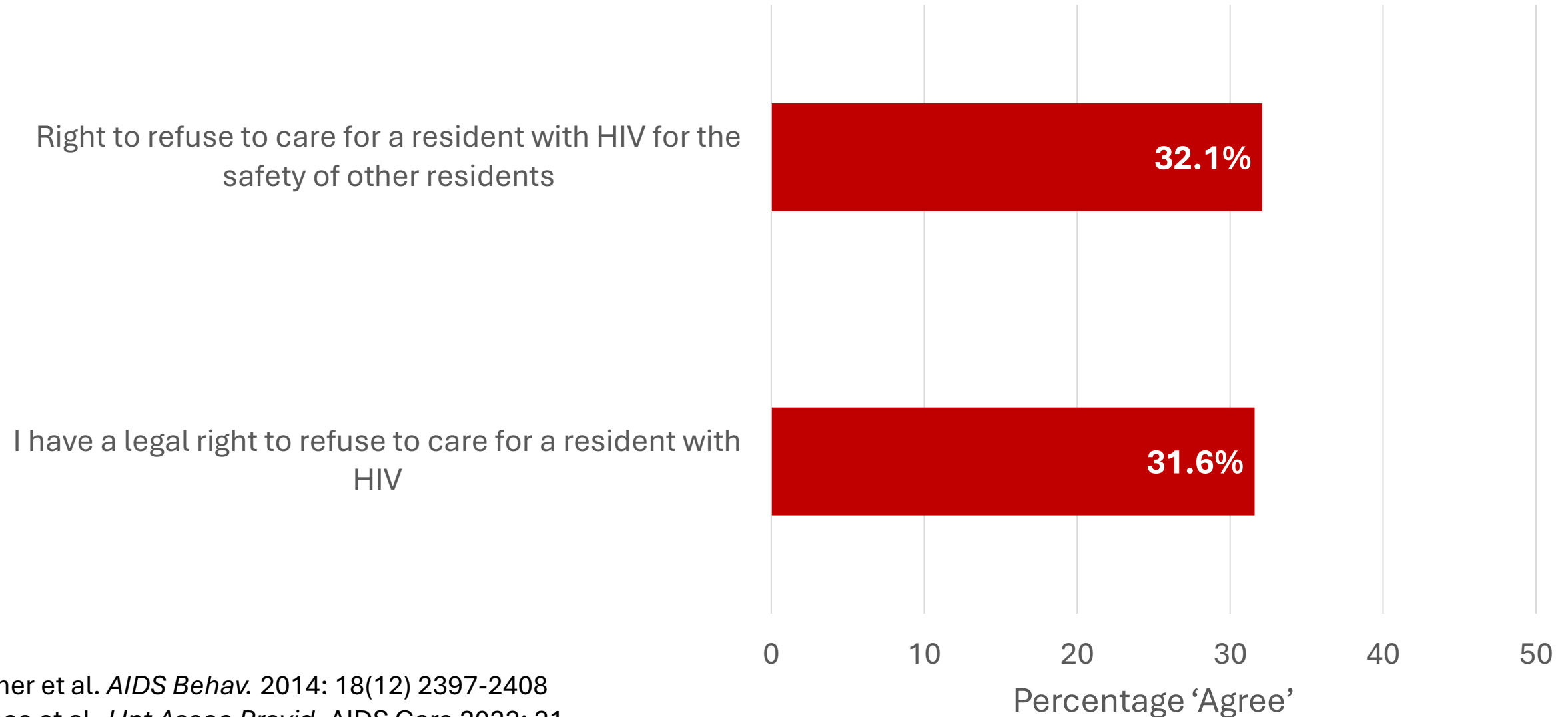
* Wagner et al. *AIDS Behav.* 2014: 18(12) 2397-2408
Spence et al. *J Int Assoc Provid. AIDS Care* 2022: 21

Stigma: stereotype statements*



* Wagner et al. *AIDS Behav.* 2014: 18(12) 2397-2408
Spence et al. *J Int Assoc Provid. AIDS Care* 2022: 21

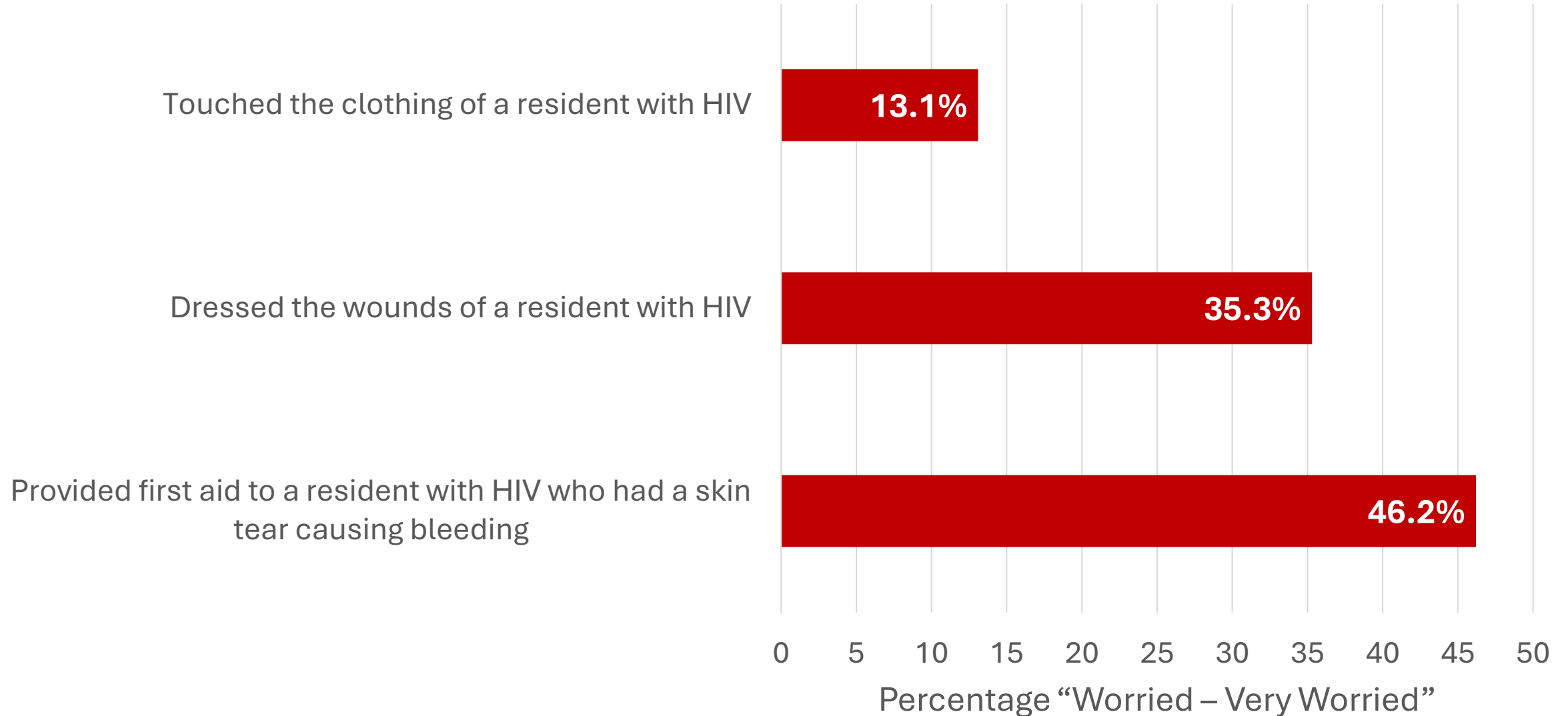
Stigma: discrimination statements*



* Wagner et al. *AIDS Behav.* 2014: 18(12) 2397-2408

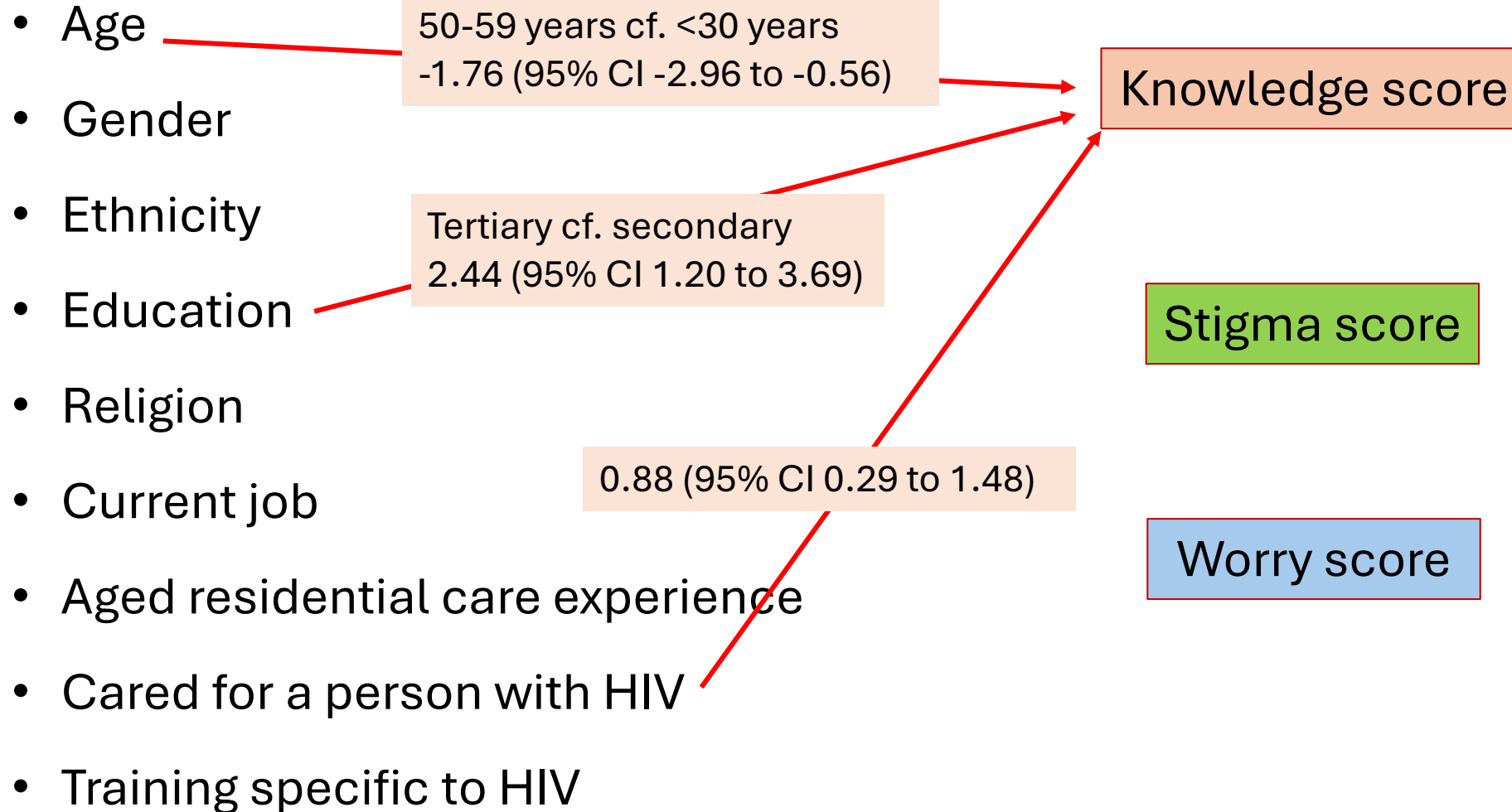
Spence et al. *J Int Assoc Provid. AIDS Care* 2022: 21

How worried would you be if you.....



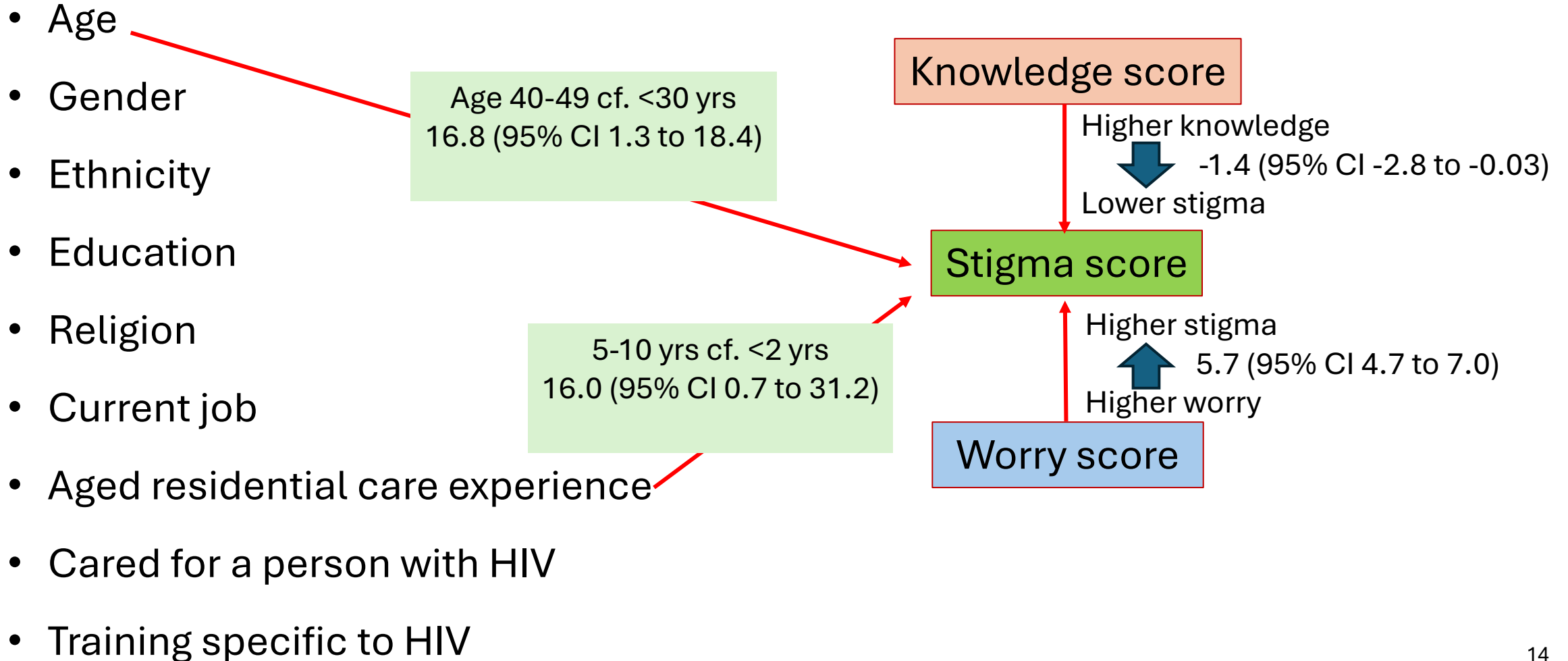
Factors associated with knowledge

Overall mean knowledge score = 7.6 (SD 2.6)



Factors associated with stigma

Overall mean stigma score (from 30 items) = 82.2 (SD 29.3)



Factors associated with worry

Overall mean worry score = 7.6 (SD 3.0)

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Education
- Religion
- Current job
- Aged residential care experience
- Cared for a person with HIV
- Training specific to HIV

40-49 cf. <30 yrs
-1.97 (95%CI -3.53 to -0.40)

Knowledge score

Stigma score

Higher stigma
↓
Higher worry
0.07 (95%CI 0.05 to 0.08)

Worry score

Factors associated with knowledge, stigma and worry

Higher education
&
experience caring
for
someone with HIV



Higher
knowledge
score



Lower
stigma
score



Lower
worry
score

Discussion & summary

- Very small sample size and in only one region of New Zealand
- Limited exposure to caring for people living with HIV
- Limited knowledge – which impacts on stigma and worry
- Knowledge still very much ‘1980’ view of HIV
- Refusal to care for people living with HIV
- Fear of exposure is very common (e.g. double gloving)

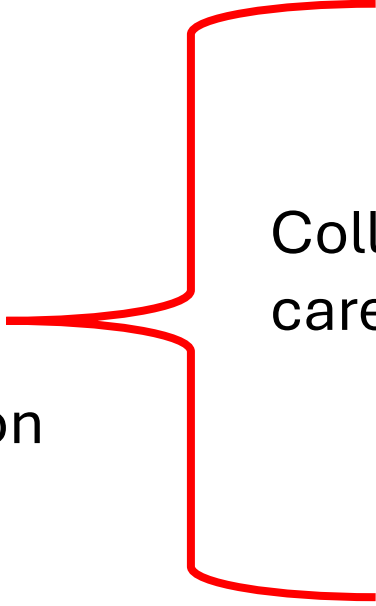
Training/education can have a positive impact on knowledge, stigma and worry of ARC healthcare staff

Intervention framework



Next steps....

- Professional development for ARC staff around HIV transmission, and management
- Policy measures to prevent discrimination and protect those living with HIV in the ARC sector



Collaboration between the aged care and the HIV sector

[Ageing Positively - Tū Tangata Rite - a resource on Ageing and HIV in Aotearoa](#)

Tū Tangata Rite | *People Standing
As One*
Ageing Positively with HIV in Aotearoa NZ

‘Sometimes it’s, you know, when it’s something different it’s always a bit of a shock. But, you know, once you get past that point, once people become more informed.....the needs may be a little bit different...we just have to adapt’.(P3)

‘People were still the same in that they need treated, you know, with the same level of care and respect, not be seen as a risk or a problem it’s just one of those things we live with, like having COPD or Hep B’.(P5)

Ngā mihi nui ki a kōoutou

Thank you very much



University
of Otago

ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA