

“Are we ready? Ageing with HIV in Aotearoa New Zealand – Knowledge and attitudes of HIV in aged care workers”

Authors:

Gilchrist R¹, Pickles M², Gray AR³, Harcombe H², Ritchie L^{1,4}, Lesa R¹, McAllister S⁵.

¹Centre for Postgraduate Nursing Studies, University of Otago, Christchurch,

²Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, Dunedin School of Medicine,

University of Otago, Dunedin, ³Biostatistics Centre, Division of Health Sciences,

University of Otago, Dunedin, ⁴Nurse Consultant (Policy, Professional Practice and

Projects), Te Whatu Ora Southern, ⁵AIDS Epidemiology Group, Department of

Preventive and Social Medicine, Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago,

Dunedin

Background:

HIV treatments have advanced considerably and people living with HIV (PLHIV) have a longer life expectancy. There is now an increasing population of older PLHIV. Many PLHIV experience stigma and discrimination – including when accessing healthcare. Our research sought to examine knowledge and attitudes of HIV in Aged Residential Care (ARC) staff to ensure the needs of the HIV community can be met when accessing this care.

Methods:

A cross-sectional study using a self-administered online survey tool was conducted in ARC facilities in Dunedin, New Zealand. Questions included the HIV-K18 knowledge questionnaire (scale from 0 (low) to 13 (high)), Health Care Provider Stigma scale, a scale measuring worry of HIV, and demographic characteristics. Multiple imputation and regression models accounting for clustering within facilities allowed investigation of associations between demographics and knowledge, stigma, and worry. Models were unadjusted, adjusted for demographics, and then further adjusted for the other two outcomes.

Results:

From 11 ARC facilities, 184 staff participated. Only 15% had received any HIV training or education related to HIV and 19% had experience in caring for at least one PLHIV. The mean (SD) knowledge score was 7.6 (2.6) out of 13. For each of five statements indicating that they had a right to refuse care for a resident with HIV, one third or more of staff agreed. In unadjusted analyses, staff with experience or HIV training had higher knowledge, less worry, and lower stigma. Experience was favourably associated with knowledge and worry following adjustment for demographics and remained associated with knowledge after also accounting for worry and stigma. Knowledge was associated with lower stigma.

Conclusion:

Ongoing professional development for ARC staff about HIV would increase their level of knowledge and could improve their care for residents with HIV. Experience in caring for residents with HIV could also be beneficial.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis & Sexual Health Medicine recognises the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.

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