

Trends in HIV notifications among people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds in Australia 2010-2023

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Background:

Australia has a large culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) population, which is increasingly represented in HIV notifications. We analysed data from the National HIV Registry to determine trends in HIV new diagnoses in Australia among people from CALD backgrounds who received a first ever HIV diagnosis in Australia.

Methods:

We performed Chi-square test on HIV notifications data between 2010-2023, and described demographics, HIV exposure risk, and stage of HIV. We defined people from CALD backgrounds as 'people who were born in non-main English-speaking countries AND/OR spoke a non-English language at home'. 'Non-CALD' people were from 'English speaking countries AND spoke English'. Notifications where country of birth was not available were excluded from the analysis.

Results:

HIV notifications among people from CALD backgrounds increased by 39.2% (from 265 in 2010 to 369 HIV notifications in 2023) over the study period, as compared to a 45% (from 615 in 2010 to 336 in 2023) decline for non-CALD notifications. The result indicates statistically significant differences in the proportion ($p<0.001$) of HIV notifications being highest among females in the CALD notifications (18%) as compared to the non-CALD population (6.5%). The CALD population had a higher proportion of younger individuals 19-39 years compared to non-CALD population. The CALD population had a higher proportion of notifications among the heterosexual category as compared to non-CALD population which has a higher proportion of individuals in the MSM and IDU categories. The result indicates a higher proportion of late diagnosis among CALD population (43%) as compared to non-CALD population (27%) ($p<0.001$).

Conclusion:

During the study period, HIV notifications among people from CALD backgrounds have increased in Australia, and the results indicate that the CALD population are likely to be diagnosed late as compared to the non- CALD population, suggesting a lack of services targeting heterosexual females of CALD background and initiatives to raise awareness about HIV testing among people from CALD backgrounds.