

# WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER FOR HIV-CURE CLINICAL TRIALS AMONG PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

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**Background:** Increasing scientific interest in HIV-cure research means many clinical trials are currently in place to investigate potential pathways toward a cure. Participation in these trials may require antiretroviral treatment interruption and so pose health risks for people living with HIV (PLHIV) who participate, while offering little or no therapeutic benefit. The views of PLHIV on acceptability of such risks should therefore inform trial design, recruitment and informed consent procedures.

In this paper we report on findings from the HIV Futures 8 study in which we explored factors influencing willingness to participate in HIV-cure trials. We discuss these findings in the context of international research on altruism as a motivator for participation in HIV cure trials.

**Methods:** HIV Futures 8 is a cross-sectional survey of 895 people living with HIV in Australia. Data were collected in 2015/2016 using a self-complete instrument. Multinomial logistic regression was used to identify associations between willingness to participate in trials and socio-demographic and attitudinal variables. Descriptive analyses further identified changes in respondents' willingness to participate in trials according to a list of hypothetical risk/benefit scenarios.

**Results:** The majority of respondents (82%) indicated they would be willing to participate in a trial. Greater willingness was linked to higher levels of optimism about HIV cure. Health risks were associated with lower willingness to participate. We did not find altruism to be a major predictor of willingness.

**Conclusions:** This study revealed interest in HIV-cure research among participants although, understandingly, willingness to participate in trials was lower if potential risks were higher.

In contrast to previous studies, respondents were more likely to identify personal factors, rather than altruism, as influencing their willingness to participate. This discrepancy in findings suggests there might be value in further research exploring community, activism and altruism as factors motivating trial participation in different settings.

## Disclosure of interest statement

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.