

DO NURSE PRACTITIONERS DELIVER? AN AUDIT OF NURSE PRACTITIONER CARE IN AUSTRALIA TO PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

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Background:

Nurse Practitioners (NPs) have been providing care to people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Australia for many years. Prescribing restrictions around NP access to antiretrovirals were removed in 2020, enabling NPs working with PLHIV to practice at full scope. There is a paucity of literature regarding the NP role in HIV care in Australia. This study aimed to evaluate NP HIV care in Australia by assessing adherence to national and international HIV monitoring guidelines.

Methods:

This retrospective self- audit of NP care involved review and data collection from clinical records of all PLHIV seen by five NPs across separate study sites throughout Australia between 1/1/2021-30/6/2022. Data collection included demographics, antiretroviral therapy, preventative health, HIV surrogate markers, and comorbidity management. Data were deidentified, pooled and analysed via Microsoft Excel and compared to HIV monitoring guidelines.

Results:

Data were provided for 358 clinical occasions of service from 212 individuals. 100% of individuals were prescribed appropriate antiretroviral regimens with adherence documented on 92% of occasions. HIV viral load testing was current for 99.5% of individuals, and all individuals with a CD4 count of <200 per/mcL were taking or were advised to take opportunistic infection prophylaxis. Sexually transmissible infection screening was documented for 96% of individuals. Cardiovascular disease risk was calculated for 69% of individuals which fell below the target of 70%, and blood pressure monitoring was current for 86% of individuals, also below target. Cervical cancer screening was current for 100% of patients who attended services where this available.

Conclusion:

Clinical audit is a valuable tool to promote reflective practice, identify practice gaps and improve care. NP compliance with monitoring guidelines exceeded targets in most areas with minimal areas for improvement identified. This data demonstrates that NPs are safe and effective providers of HIV outpatient care and adds to literature supporting NP practice within Australia.

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