

70% of Australians living with HIV report their health-related quality of life to be good

December 2 2022



Credit: La Trobe University

To coincide with World AIDS Day on December 1, a major national survey of Australians living with HIV has revealed more than 70% of people living with HIV report their health-related quality of life to be

good.

This is very close to the target set in the current National HIV Strategy of 75% of people living with HIV reporting good quality of life by 2022.

[HIV Futures](#) is a periodic national survey of people living with HIV run by the Australian Research Center in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University. The survey has tracked quality of life among study participants for more than 20 years.

Lead researcher, Associate Professor Jennifer Power from La Trobe University said, HIV Futures has captured some significant changes that have occurred for people living with HIV in Australia since 1997 when the survey was first conducted.

"In 1997, highly effective combination [antiretroviral therapy](#) had only recently become available. Many people with HIV were terminally unwell or facing an [uncertain future](#)," Associate Professor Power said.

"Thanks to effective antiretroviral treatment, the story today is very different. People with HIV now live healthy lives and assume [average life expectancy](#).

"We interpret this as meaning over 70% of people living with HIV do not feel that HIV significantly detracts from their quality of life. This is a great testament to the work done by many people in Australia to support health and well-being in this community," Associate Professor Power said.

However, Associate Professor Power warns that the story of well-being among people living with HIV is still complicated and many people living with HIV manage the wearing effects of living with a highly stigmatized condition.

"It is likely that ordinary Australians know very little about what it means to live with HIV in 2022. Most people are not aware that sexual transmission of HIV is basically impossible if someone is on regular antiretroviral treatment," Associate Professor Power said.

"This lack of awareness means that people living with HIV continue to experience high levels of stigma and discrimination."

Of the 816 people who participated in the HIV Futures 10 survey, around one in three had experienced some form of stigma or discrimination in the past year and one in three had experienced poorer treatment in a healthcare setting.

HIV-related stigma has negative impact on well-being for people living with HIV.

Dr. John Rule, Senior Research Manager for the National Association for People with HIV Australia, and a co-author on the HIV Futures report, said the impact of stigma on the everyday lives of people living with HIV is profound.

"People have to manage ongoing vigilance and worry about the potential for negative or difficult reactions from others. It's stressful. Increasing awareness and understanding of HIV across the wider community will do a lot to improve the lives of people living with HIV," Dr. Rule said.

Provided by La Trobe University

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