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Women and HIV

Why are women still invisible?

Diane Lloyd

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My Life / Just me

I am a 58 year old woman who has...

... been living with HIV for 33 years



my life +

ViiV Healthcare
napwha

for her⁺

MyLife+ empowers people with HIV to take control of their health and wellbeing, and manage their overall quality of life.

Download now to stay happy, healthy and connected.

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Board and Committee Representation

Board Member - NAPWHA (National Association of People Living with HIV and AIDS) – **1 of 2 women**

Committee Member – Femfatales (National network of women living with HIV – NAPWHA working group)

Board Member – POWA (Positive Organisation Western Australia) – **Only woman**



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The Difference Between Stigma and Discrimination

Stigma is considered to be an opinion or judgment held by individuals or society

If these judgments are acted upon, these actions may be considered to be discriminatory



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Who may discriminate against PLWHIV?

- Dr/Practitioner
- Pharmacy
- Police
- Prison
- Health Service
- Hospital
- Government Services
- Drug and Alcohol Service
- Work place/or employment ag
- General Community
- Family/Friends/Partners
- Child Protection services
- Dealing with schools/day care
- Media



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WHAT MATTERS MOST
IS HOW YOU SEE YOURSELF.



- ✓ **Has devastating effects**
- ✓ **Wears people down**
- ✓ **Feel isolated**
- ✓ **Low self esteem**
- ✓ **Depression**
- ✓ **Affects self image/self worth**
- ✓ **Altered life/career aspirations**
- ✓ **Feelings of inferiority**

Over a long period of time



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As Women...

Some background information:

- ✔ In Australia there are approximately 3,000 women with HIV, representing around 10%

- ✔ There has been a 7% decrease in HIV notifications in Australia in the last 5 years due to the significant decrease in notifications amongst men reporting male to male sex.

- ✔ However there has not been a decline in HIV notifications among people who acquired HIV from heterosexual sex, in fact there was an increase in 2017.

- ✔ Of these individuals 48% were more likely to be diagnosed late.

- ✔ During the years between 2013 and 2017 191 babies were born in Australia to women with HIV. 1% of these new born babies were diagnosed with HIV compared to 27% between 1993 and 1997.



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As Women...

Studies:

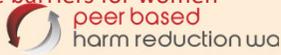
- Women are under represented in clinical trials, this makes it difficult to have a gender comparison.

- In the past clinical trials for HIV meds did not include women.

- As a woman, it is difficult to get conclusive answers on issues such as ART and:
 - Reproductive health
 - Fertility
 - Menopause
 - Breast feeding

- Women living with HIV are a very diverse group, such as age, isolation, Aboriginal, Torres Straight Island women and many were born overseas, and so it makes it difficult to collate data on women with HIV that will represent ALL WOMEN.

- Language, cultural and religious issues can also be barriers for women



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As Women...

Testing:

- Only 2.7% of women from the Futures 8 study felt that they were a member of an at risk group and were tested for HIV. This may be a result of most education being geared towards men who have sex with men. We need more specific education towards the heterosexual community.
- Other reasons women said they had been tested were because of Visa requirements and during pregnancy.
- Still from the Futures 8 study, 80.5% never had a test prior to their diagnoses because they don't tend to see being heterosexual as a risk.
- Therefore, as a result, very few women are diagnosed with newly acquired HIV. Women are often late presenters, that can result in an already compromised immune system or presentation with an AIDS defining illness.



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Femfatales / National Day of Women Living with HIV Day

➤ Femfatales

- The National Network of Women Living with HIV, known as Femfatales, is an advisory group by and for women living with HIV, constituted to provide collaboration between those involved in policy and advocacy work for women living with HIV in Australia. We advocate, inform policy, collaborate and contribute to research and respond to the issues and challenges facing all women living with HIV in Australia.
- The work plan can be seen on the NAPWHA web site.
- On **March 9th 2020** will be the 3rd year we have celebrated –**National Day of Women Living with HIV in Australia**, the theme for next year is **no women left behind**. This awareness raising day was created by Femfatales. The more we talk about women and HIV and encourage women to be tested, we then can help raise awareness that support women living with and affected by HIV.



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As Women...

Have to say not a lot has changed issues such as:

- ✓ The reproductive rights of women
- ✓ Child birth/ breast feeding
- ✓ Women from Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island /CALD background compared with non indigenous women.
- ✓ Gaps in research/side effects and the female body....
- ✓ How to encourage women to participate

I am glad to see we have at least one whole session on women with HIV. I have still had to remind many people those of us with a **vagina** also get **HIV** and its time we were not invisible.



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