Older Women, Sexuality, and the Stigma of HIV

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Objectives

• Examine the impact of HIV on the sexuality of older women, with special emphasis on women of color.
• Identify known barriers to HIV prevention, treatment, and care services for older women.
• Develop strategies for reducing HIV stigma in older women.
• Review resources available that address sexuality and HIV stigma in older women of color.
Why is it important to talk about HIV and older women?
Persons aged 50 years and older accounted for:

- 17% of all new HIV diagnoses in 2016
  - More than 1 in 4 of those diagnoses were in women.
- 47% of persons living with diagnosed HIV infection in the United States at the end of 2015
Extracted from Table 2a. Diagnoses of HIV infection among adults aged 50 years and older, by year of diagnosis, age group, and selected characteristics, 2011–2016—United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females aged 50-64 at diagnosis by Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>1,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple races</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander *</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The CDC Report recommends using caution when interpreting data for older Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders because the numbers are small.
Extracted from Table 2b. Diagnoses of HIV infection among adults aged 50 years and older, by year of diagnosis, age group, and selected characteristics, 2011–2016—United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females aged 50-64 at diagnosis by Transmission Category</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injection Drug Use</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual Contact</td>
<td>1429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1669</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications

- People 50 years and older account for a substantial number of HIV diagnoses.
- 86% of all newly diagnosed women over the age of 50 acquired HIV through heterosexual contact.
- Understanding the burden of HIV among different subgroups of older persons can help HIV programs to focus on populations and areas at greatest need for HIV prevention, care and treatment services.
Known Barriers to HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment Services for Older Women

• Social barriers
• Stigma
OLDER WOMEN HAVE SEX
Factors that Affect Risk for Acquiring HIV

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Being unaware of the risk histories of male partners
- Mental health issues, physical and sexual trauma and life stressors
- Intimate partner violence
- Taking risks within a relationship
- Lack of HIV prevention information

Factors that Affect Risk for Acquiring HIV Cont.

- Older women do not perceive themselves at risk for acquiring HIV
- Providers do not perceive older women as being at risk for acquiring HIV
  - Often think symptoms are related to other medical conditions
- Older women are less likely to ask their partners about sexual histories, advocate for condom use, or seek out HIV prevention information
- **Stigma**
Sexuality and HIV

- Older women are re-entering the dating scene after divorce or being widowed.
- Older women are less likely to use condoms believing they are not at risk for acquiring HIV.
- Women living with HIV are more likely to choose celibacy
  - Loss of interest in sex since diagnosis
  - Aversion to sex
  - Fear of infecting someone else
- Women living with HIV are reluctant to disclosure their status due to fear of judgement and isolation (STIGMA)
  - Mental health
  - Social support
  - Willingness to engage in and access healthcare
Group Exercise

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 3174 00

1. Grab your phone
2. Go to www.menti.com
3. Enter the code 3174 00 and vote!
Group Exercise

What words have you heard that are associated with a person living with cancer?
Group Exercise

What words have you heard that are associated with a person living with HIV?
Let’s Define Stigma

What is HIV Stigma?
HIV stigma is defined as prejudice, discounting, discrediting and discrimination directed towards persons perceived to have HIV or AIDS.

“**STIGMA**—which can be a debilitating barrier preventing people living with, or at risk for, HIV from receiving the health care, services, and respect they need and deserve—still tragically surrounds HIV. Responding to HIV is not just a biomedical issue, but a social challenge, too.”

Factors that Contribute to HIV Stigma in Older Women

- Self esteem
- Self silencing
- Sexual assertiveness
Types of Stigma

- **Enacted** stigma - the extent to which an individual experiences prejudice and/or discrimination from others.

- **Internalized** stigma - the extent to which those negative attributes and beliefs about people living with HIV are endorsed and accepted internally.

- **Anticipated** stigma - the extent to which a person living with HIV expects to experience enacted stigma.

Social Factors that are also Stigmatizing for Older Women of Color

- Poverty
- Racism
- Gender Inequality
Effects of HIV Stigma

• Stigma can cause older women to be more reluctant to get tested for HIV or disclose their HIV status. This could affect their health care treatment or prevent them from taking precautions to reduce transmission.
• Stigma results in social isolation, either through rejection by social network members or self-protective withdrawal, leading to loneliness and depression.

Effects of HIV Stigma (Cont.)

Stigma can also result in:

• Loss of income
• Loss of hope
• Loss of reputation in the family and community
Strategies for Reducing HIV Stigma in Older Women

• Provide HIV-related education, prevention, and outreach targeting older women

• Engage communities, community-based organizations and social service providers in outreach, mental health and social support

• Educate medical providers to be proactive in discussing sexual health, substance use and issues related to mental illness with women over 50
Strategies for Reducing HIV Stigma in Older Women

• Engage and empower women living with HIV over 50 to understand and advocate for their healthcare and identify unique needs

• Educate the community on the importance of the language they use when talking about HIV
National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day (NHAAD) September 18th

Goals

• Increase the quality of life for people living with HIV (PLWH).
• Reduce stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS among the aging population.
Video Launch

Use Your Voice – Addressing Stigma in Older Women
Available Resources

NATIONAL HIV/AIDS AND AGING AWARENESS DAY
SEPTEMBER 18TH
A national campaign highlighting the complex issues related to HIV prevention, care, and treatment for aging populations in the United States

GOALS
• Increase the quality of life for people living with HIV
• Reduce stigma surrounding HIV among the aging population

DID YOU KNOW?
In 2016, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported persons aged 50 and older accounted for approximately 47% of persons living with HIV

1 in 6 new diagnoses in the U.S. were in people aged 50 and older

To find an HIV testing site near you, visit gettested.cdc.gov

HIV data is referenced from www.cdc.gov/hiv

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.NHAAD.ORG

AGE IS NOT A CONDOM.
Americans aged 50 and older have many of the same HIV risk factors as younger Americans. Educate yourself. Get tested for HIV.

Find HIV Testing Near You:
• Send a text message with your ZIP code to KNOWIT (566948)
• Visit gettested.cdc.gov
• Visit locator.hiv.gov
• Contact 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day
September 18th
Visit www.NHAAD.org for more information.
Additional Resources

- The AIDS Institute
  www.theaidsinstitute.org
- National HIV/AIDS and Aging Awareness Day (NHAAD)
  www.nhaad.org
- HIV.gov
  www.hiv.gov
- The ACRIA Center on HIV & Aging
  www.acria.org/hiv-aging
- HIV and Aging Toolkit
  www.nursesinaidscare.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4792
- The Well Project
  www.thewellproject.org/hiv-information/why-language-matters-facing-hiv-stigma-our-own-words
Thank You!

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