

Overview

The Healthy Living Project was a qualitative research endeavor to formally explore the needs of older PLWH in Los Angeles. The formal purpose of this project was to comprehensively understand community-specific challenges and concerns faced by older people living with HIV (OPLWH) in LAC, and to receive community-level input for programmatic and public health service directions. Focus groups were conducted with gay and bisexual men; heterosexual men; transgender women; and cisgender women. The results presented here focus on gay and bisexual men, and transgender women. Participants were asked questions about their experiences and difficulties aging with HIV. Population-specific differences were observed, and overarching themes that arose included worries of financial security; safe and affordable housing; cultural competence for HIV and aging medical and service needs; and social support.

Introduction

- There are an estimated 60,000 people living with HIV (PLWH) in LAC. Of this number, 45% are over the age of 50, which is poised to increase to 72% by 2025
- The majority of PLWH are living longer due to effective HIV medications and treatments. However, OPLWH have to manage multiple chronic diseases (co-morbidities) commonly associated with older age in addition to maintaining their HIV treatment regimens
- Research demonstrates a correlation between depression, loneliness, health, HIV/AIDS-related stigma and ageism as having negative impacts on this population
- There is a significant gap in innovative programmatic and public health efforts to address psychosocial, social, and physical health complexities impacting OPLWH
- The general social service system in LAC also does not address the unique needs of the diverse population of OPLWH, with respect to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and race

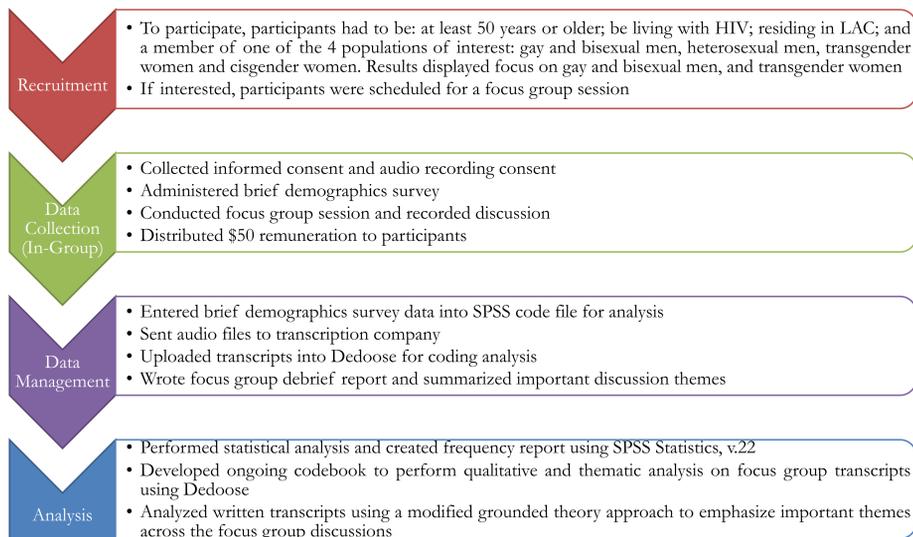
The Healthy Living Project

APLA Health's response to this need was the Healthy Living Project, a qualitative research endeavor to formally explore the needs of OPLWH in Los Angeles. The goals of the study were:

- To learn about where and what type of services older adults living with HIV receive in Los Angeles and how to disseminate program information to them.
- Understand barriers and challenges older gay men living with HIV experience
- Understand experiences with HIV care and support services and identify service gaps for this population
- Explore possible program activities/strategies that older adults living with HIV perceive will assist them with managing the psychosocial and physical complexities of aging with HIV

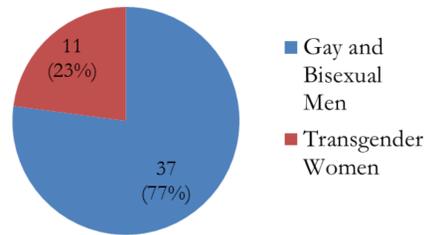
The results presented here focus on discussions with gay and bisexual men, and transgender women

Methods

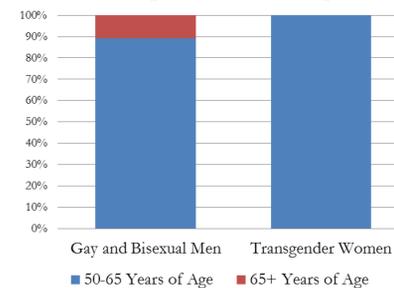


Participant Sample Characteristics (n = 48)

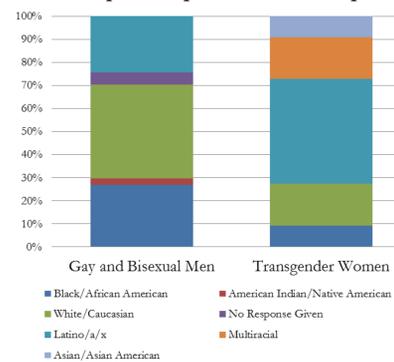
Number of Participants



Age Distribution of Focus Group Participants Across Groups

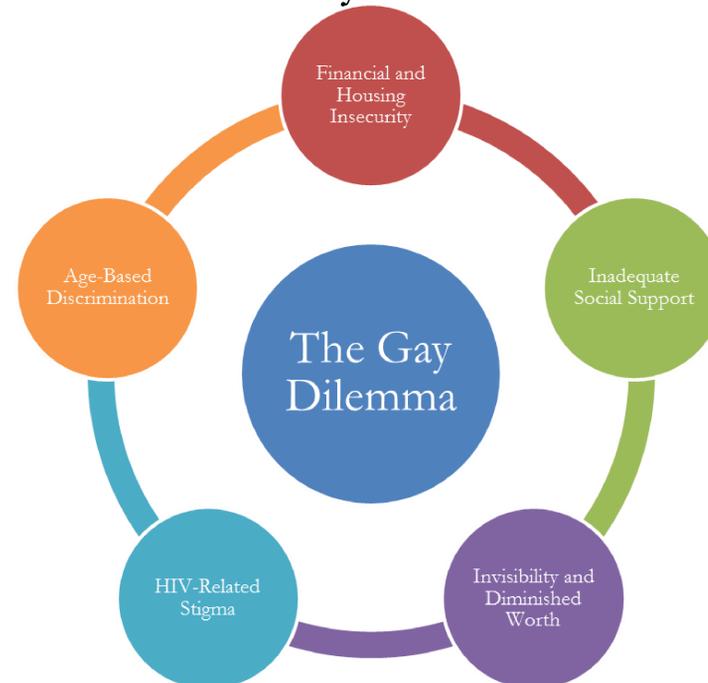


Racial Distribution of Focus Group Participants Across Groups

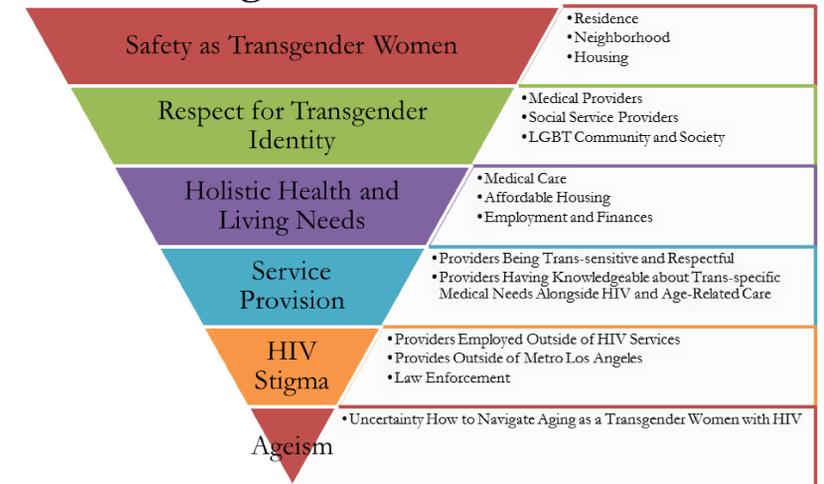


- Less than 10 % of all participants reported being employed full-time, and more than half reported utilizing disability as a means for financial subsidy
- More than half of the participants identifying as gay and bisexual men and transgender women identified as long-term survivors (living with HIV for 15 years or longer)
- More than 80% of participants reported their viral load to currently be undetectable
- Approximately half of all participants had a current or previous AIDS diagnosis, with 70% of all the gay and bisexual male participants having had a current or previous AIDS diagnosis

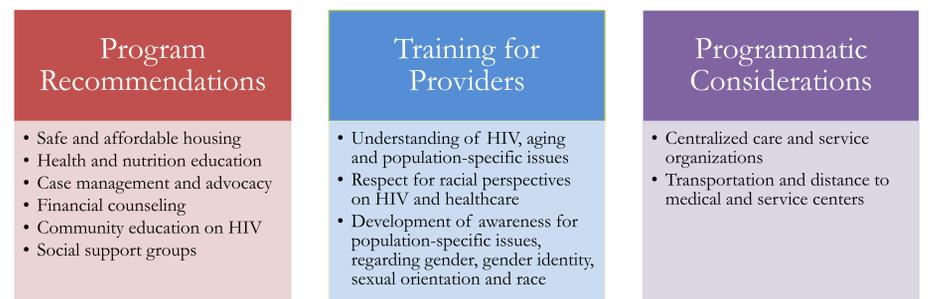
The Gay Dilemma



Transgender First, HIV Second



Conclusions – Programmatic Directions



Limitations

- We recruited small participant samples per population group, which were gathered through samples of convenience
- These results are specific experiences of particular individuals, and may not be reflective of what all OPLWH in LAC feel about aging with HIV
- All focus groups were conducted in English, which leaves out the experiences of monolingual Spanish individuals, who make up a large portion OPLWH in LAC

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 Study Participants

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