SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF OLDER ADULTS LIVING WITH HIV: INFORMAL SUPPORT AND VOLUNTEERING

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INTRODUCTION

- The population of people living with HIV aged 50 and over (PLHIV50+) is increasingly growing in Western countries.
- In Canada, in 2008, 15% of new HIV diagnoses and 21% of AIDS cases occurred among the age group of 50 and over (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010).
- People living with HIV are considered to be older adults as soon as 50, because of premature aging.
- PLHIV50+ tend to be perceived as needing support, because of health problems and social difficulties.
- Most of the studies focus on the support received by the population of PLHIV50+
Social participation has been described as having beneficial effects on older people
- Physical health
- Social inclusion, social roles
- Psychological well-being, feeling of usefulness

Scarcity of studies on the social participation of older adults living with HIV
- Only one study shows that PLHIV50+ provide care to their social network (partner, friends, family, neighbours)
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Document the contributions of the older adults living with HIV through informal support and volunteering

- Examine the motivations and the barriers older adults with HIV face to volunteering
METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative research on the experience of PLHIV50+.
- Recruitment through physicians at « l’Actuel » medical clinic.
- 38 participants aged from 50 to 73.
- Semi-structured interviews lasting for 2h30, recorded and transcribed.
- Qualitative analysis based on the grounded theory.
- Use of QDAMiner software
RESULTS
More than half of participants provide support to their social network
- 1/2 women
- 1/2 heterosexual men
- 2/3 MSM

Less than one quarter (8/38) are involved in volunteer work
- 1/5 women
- 1/6 heterosexual men
- 1/4 MSM
SUPPORT OFFERED TO OTHERS

- Caregiving to elderly parents (more by MSM & women)
  - Practical support, financial management

- Support to children and young people
  - Emotional support (in general and related to HIV)
  - Financial/material support

- Support to friends
  - Moral support

- Support to neighbour
  - Practical support

- Support to PLHIV recently infected
VOLUNTEERING

- Present volunteer work (n=8)
  - Community-based organization related to HIV
  - Housing cooperatives
  - People with diminished autonomy
  - Religious communities

- Past volunteer work (n=6)
  - Community-based organization related to HIV
  - Changes in the choice of the place of involvement
  - Reasons of change or cessation of involvement:
    - lead a normal life, change in the type of support needed, lack of time, negative impact on psychological well-being
MOTIVATIONS/BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING

- Motivations
  - Socialization, breaking isolation
  - Psychological well-being
  - Activity
  - Altruism

- Barriers
  - Lack of time
  - Not being ready yet
  - Unstable health status
DISCUSSION-CONCLUSION

- Results highlight social participation of older adults living with HIV
- PLHIV50+ provide care to their relatives and social network (as noticed in another study)
- Very low rate of volunteer work compared with general population of older adults
  - \( \approx 40\% \) of 55-74 years old versus 20\% of our participants
- Some reasons common to the general older population but also specific reasons related to HIV
  - premature health degradation
  - HIV-stigma?
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