

CONTACT:

Phone: 1-888-740-1166
 Web: www.PositivePlusOne.ca
 Email: info@PositivePlusOne.ca

Positive Plus one will:

- (1) characterize HIV-serodiscordant couples across Canada;
- (2) examine the individual, inter-partner, and social determinants of relationship satisfaction;
- (3) examine links between relationship quality and management of HIV transmission risk;
- (4) assess HIV serodiscordant couples' needs and access to supportive services; and
- (5) document how serodiscordance affects their relationship and everyday life.

POSITIVE PLUS ONE IS FUNDED BY:



CIHR IRSC
 Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

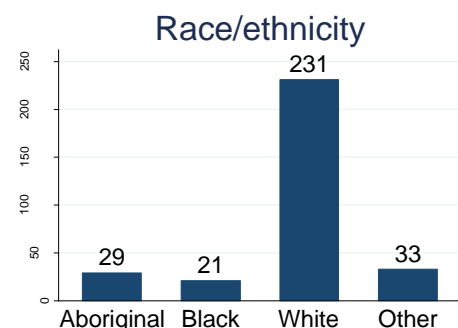
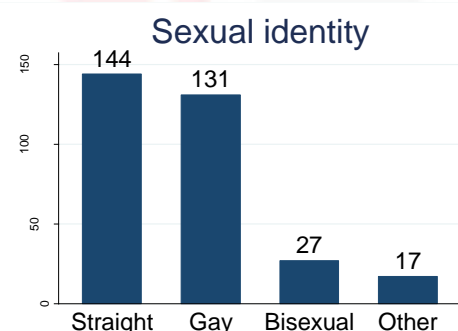
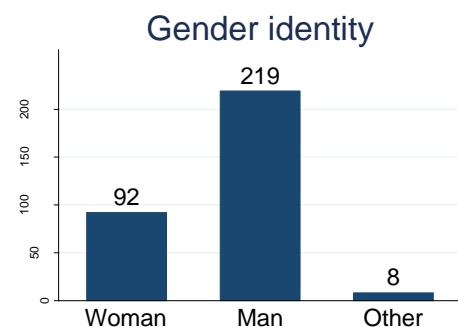


As HIV-positive individuals are living longer lives, more and more people today are in relationships where only one of the two people has HIV (an HIV-serodiscordant relationship). As many as 16,000 HIV-positive people in Canada may be in serodiscordant relationships. While there has been research on living with HIV, far less is known about the issues faced by serodiscordant couples.

This newsletter provides an update on *Positive Plus One* - a national, mixed-methods study of serodiscordant couples. We are calling on you to help us during this next wave of recruitment, to ensure that the diverse voices of many serodiscordant couples are heard.

People who have taken the survey

During the first 6 months, 320 persons (185 HIV-positive and 135 HIV-negative) have participated. The sample represents 206 couples, and for 69 of these relationships both partners have completed the survey. Approximately equal numbers are gay and straight. The majority are male and white.



While participants come from all regions we are currently underrepresented, relative to the distribution of people with HIV in Canada, in the following regions: Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, and BC.

Note: In all above, 'other' is a combination of the most infrequently-chosen categories for that question. Most common 'other' category for sexual identity is 'queer'; most common 'other' race status is an Indigenous identity (e.g. 'Aboriginal and white'); for gender, 'other' is a mix of transgendered, and two-spirited.



SHARE



HELP



BE HEARD

The survey not only needs more participants, but more representation across different groups. Without such representation, we will be unable to make regional comparisons, or discuss, in any detail, issues unique to specific groups or relatively-uncommon situations.

Some preliminary findings and presentations

Positive Plus One presented a poster at the Canadian Association of HIV/AIDS Research (CAHR) in May of 2016, in Winnipeg. The poster showcased the study's innovative design and wide outreach, while inviting HIV/AIDS researchers and service providers to assist with study recruitment.

We have also been accepted to present a poster on October 24th, 2016, at the Ontario

HIV Treatment Network's conference *HIV Endgame I: Closing Gaps in the Care Cascade*, where we will discuss HIV-negative partners in serodiscordant relationships as the missing link in the HIV cascade of care.

Based on analyses prepared for the submission, we found that among HIV-negative partners, 25% had not disclosed their serodiscordant partnership status to their physicians, and 42% had not tested in the past 12 months. If their physician was aware of their relationship, they were more likely to test in the past year (4.5 times the odds of testing). About 90% had not used PrEP, but 59% of those who had not used PrEP would consider using it.

PARTICIPANTS EXPRESS A WIDE RANGE OF VIEWPOINTS IN THE SURVEY

- ***“Our relationship it's great, we respect each other, we laugh, cry, have fun together, and most of all we very much love each other.” (HIV-positive gay man)***
- ***“I think we could have used some counselling at the beginning when it all seemed like a lot to take in and I wasn't sure I was willing to stick it out with her. Lots to learn, no one to really help me see that it isn't so bad...I learn from the internet and there are some good sites out there, but I want to know more about PrEP. It seems to be really expensive and not a realistic option.” (HIV-negative straight man)***
- ***“Stigma is still a big issue, even though transmission is not a reality if you are undetectable. Stigma impacts relationships, negotiation of sex, [and] self-esteem.” (HIV-positive queer woman)***
- ***“My husband is excluded from certain health services and programs based on his HIV-negative status” (HIV-positive gay man)***
- ***“[We need] counsellors just for serodiscordant couples - never had a counsellor who understands what her issues are in the relationship; need to make it more public. Information about PrEP, PEP, etc. – she had not heard of it.” (HIV-positive lesbian woman)***
- ***“Who is out there to help people with HIV positive partners? I feel like I am alone.” (HIV-negative straight woman)***
- ***“There is no counselling for our needs in our area” (HIV-positive straight woman)***



What is next for the study?

If you are receiving this newsletter, you are someone who is helping us to recruit participants. We thank you for your support and we ask that you please continue to advertise the study and inform people who may be eligible.

On the next page, you will see a list of organizations that are currently helping to promote the study, including your own. **If you have recommendations for other places where we should be promoting the study, please do not hesitate to let us know.**

We will remain in the field until at least the New Year. We will start the **qualitative** component of the study before the end of October.

Although surveys provide us with important information, qualitative interviews will allow people in HIV-discordant relationships to tell the story of how their relationship has unfolded over time, and also allow us to better understand how people across different regions and

backgrounds experience life in serodiscordant relationships.

We strongly believe that the information gathered in this study, from the survey and the interviews, has the potential to make a substantial change in the lives of people in serodiscordant relationships.



A person may participate in Positive Plus One if:

- 1) They are currently in a relationship where one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative and the relationship has lasted 3 months or longer, OR they were in one in the past 2 years,**
- 2) They live in Canada, and lived in Canada during at least part of the relationship,**
- 3) They are at least 18 years old,**
- 4) They speak either English or French,**
- 5) If they are HIV-positive, they have disclosed their status to their HIV-negative partner.**

Investigative Team:

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| Liviana Calzavara (PI, Univ. Toronto) | Mona Loutfy (Maple Leaf Medical Clinic) |
| Dan Allman (Univ. of Toronto) | Renée Masching (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network) |
| Chris Aucoin (AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia) | Ryan Meili (Univ. of Saskatchewan) |
| Jean-Guy Baril (Clinique Médicale du Quartier Latin) | Joshua Mendelsohn (Pace Univ.) |
| Laura Bisailon (Univ. of Toronto) | Ted Myers (Univ. of Toronto) |
| Adam Bourne (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) | Jean-Pierre Routy (McGill Univ.) |
| Ann Burchell (St. Michael's Hospital) | Shannon Ryan (Black CAP) |
| Ken Clement (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network) | Stephen Sanche (SHARE) |
| Brian Conway (Vancouver Infectious Diseases Centre) | Stuart Skinner (Univ. of Saskatchewan) |
| Amrita Daftary (Univ. of Toronto) | Kris Stewart (Univ. of Saskatchewan) |
| Laurie Edmiston (CATIE) | Darrel Tan (St. Michael's Hospital) |
| Brenda Gladstone (Univ. of Toronto) | Donna Tennant (Positive Women's Network) |
| Terry Howard (Positive Living BC) | Wangari Tharao (Women's Health in Women's Hands) |
| Gary Lacasse (Canadian AIDS Society) | Tamara Thompson (Western Univ.) |
| Bertrand Lebouché (McGill Univ.) | Chris Tsoukas (McGill Univ.) |
| | Jocelyn Watchorn (AIDS Committee of Toronto) |
| | Alexander Wong (Regina General Hospital) |

Study staff:
Sandra Bullock - Project Manager
James Iveniuk - Post-doctoral Fellow

ORGANIZATIONS PROMOTING THE STUDY

British Columbia

ASOs/NGOs

ASK Wellness Society
AIDS Network Kootenay Outreach and Support Society
AIDS Vancouver Island
Afro-Canadian Positive Network of BC
Boys and Girls Club of Williams Lake & District
Heart of Richmond AIDS Society
Living Positive Resource Centre Okanagan
Northern BC First Nations HIV/AIDS Coalition
Positive Living BC
Positive Living North
Positive Women's Network
Red Road HIV/AIDS Network
The Pacific AIDS Network
Three Bridges Community Centre - STOP HIV Program
Vancouver Island Persons living with HIV/AIDS Society
WINGS Housing Society

Clinics

Bute Street Clinic
Dr. Peter Centre
Health Initiative for Men (HIM) Health Centres
Oaktree Clinic
Vancouver Infectious Diseases Centre

Alberta

ASOs/NGOs

Alberta Community Council on HIV
Central Alberta AIDS Network Society
HIV Community Link
HIV Network of Edmonton Society
HIV North Society
HIV West Yellowhead Society
Lethbridge HIV Connection
Living Positive Through Positive Living Society of Alberta
Shining Mountain Living Community Services
Society Housing AIDS Restricted Persons

Clinics

Southern Alberta HIV Clinic
University of Alberta Hospital

Saskatchewan

ASOs/NGOs

All Nations Hope Network
OUTSaskatoon Inc
Persons Living with AIDS Network of Sask, Saskatoon
Saskatchewan Prevention Institute
Saskatoon Indian Métis Friendship Centre

Other

Mayfair Drugs (33rd street branch, Saskatoon)
Medicine Shoppe (33rd street branch, Saskatoon)

Manitoba

ASOs/NGOs

Aboriginal Women Responding to the HIV/AIDS Crisis
Sexuality Education Research Centre of Manitoba
Sunshine House Inc. Mandate
The 595 Prevention Team

Clinics

The HIV Program - University of Manitoba Health Sciences Centre
Nine Circles Community Health Centre

Territories

ASOs/NGOs

Blood Ties Four Directions Centre
Government of Nunavut, Health Centre

Ontario

ASOs/NGOs

2 Spirited Peoples of the First Nations
ACCKWA
Action Positive
AIDS Committee of Durham Region
AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area
AIDS Committee of Ottawa
AIDS Committee of Toronto
AIDS Committee of Windsor
AIDS Committee of York Region
African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario
Africans in Partnership against HIV/AIDS
Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
Asian Community AIDS Services
Black CAP
Braids for AIDS
Bruce House

CATIE

Canadian AIDS Society
Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation
Casey House Hospice
Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples
Chiefs of Ontario
Elevate NWO
Fife House
FrancoQueer
Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance
Gilbert Centre
Good Shepherd Ministries
HARP
HIV/AIDS Regional Services
HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health
Hamilton AIDS Network
Hemophilia Ontario
Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development
Latinos Positivos
Maggie's: The Toronto Sex Workers Action Project
Ontario AIDS Network
Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy
PWA Foundation
Peel HIV/AIDS Network
People to People Aid Organization
Peterborough AIDS Resource Network
Positive Living Niagara
REACH
Reseau Access Network
The 519
The AIDS Committee of York Region
The Teresa Group
The Works

Clinics

Crossways Clinic / Jane Street SHC
Hassle Free Clinic
The HAVEN Program of Health Sciences North
Infectious Disease Clinic – Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
Maple Leaf Medical Clinic
Scarborough Centre/Talk Shop
Somerset West Community Health Centre
St. Joseph's Hospital HIV Clinic
Women's Health in Women's Hands

Other

Cloud Care Clinics (Pharmacy)
Club 120
Oasis Aqualounge
Ryerson University HIV Prevention Lab

Quebec

ASOs/NGOs

AIDS Community Care Montreal
Bureau Regional d'action Sida (BRAS)
Centre Des Roses De L'Abitibi
Centre Sida-Amitié
Centre for AIDS Services of Montreal Women
L'A.R.C.H.E. de L'Estrie
Maison Plein Coeur
Portail VIH/Sida du Quebec
REZO Health and Wellbeing
Sida-Vie Laval
Sidaction Mauricie

Clinics

Chronic Viral Illness Service, Royal Victoria Hospital/MUHC
Clinique Médical du Quartier Latin

Maritimes/Newfoundland and Labrador

ASOs/NGOs

ACNS - AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia
AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador
AIDS Moncton
AIDS New Brunswick
AIDS PEI Community Support Group
AIDS Saint John
African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes
Ally Centre of Cape Breton
Direction 180
Healing our Nations
Mainline Needle Exchange
Northern AIDS Connection Society

Clinics

Halifax Sexual Health Centre
Memorial University Hospital
Nova Scotia Health Authority
Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre
Saint John Regional Hospital Infectious Disease Clinic
The Moncton Hospital HIV Clinic