

Community input to develop an online platform for older adults aging with HIV: preliminary results from potential users in three U.S. cities

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Background

Older people living with HIV (PLWH)

- experience elevated rates of depression and anxiety
- are more likely to experience significant social isolation
- often experience physical and mental health symptoms exacerbated by aging and living with HIV

Our study aims to create an online platform (“Virtual Village”) called Positive Connections 50+ (PC50+) to connect PLWH aged 50+ with:

- community resources
- service providers
- social support



Focus groups and interviews collected perspectives on how COVID-19 impacted older PLWH and input on considerations for the Virtual Village.

Methods

Who

Inclusion criteria:

- Living with HIV
- Age 50+ years
- Speak and understand English
- Have internet and webcam access
- Live in one of the 3 study areas:
 - Tampa, FL, USA
 - Palm Springs, CA, USA
 - Los Angeles, CA, USA

What

9 focus groups

27 individual interviews

Pre-focus group/interview survey

- Pre-interview/focus group survey gathered demographic and baseline characteristics
- Identical interview guides used for focus groups and interviews
- Community Advisory Board provided input on question guide development and informed consent
- Participants received \$50

When

July-November 2021

Where

via Zoom

Data Analysis

All focus groups and interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analyzed inductively using line-by-line coding. Codes were merged, divided, and categorized into themes.

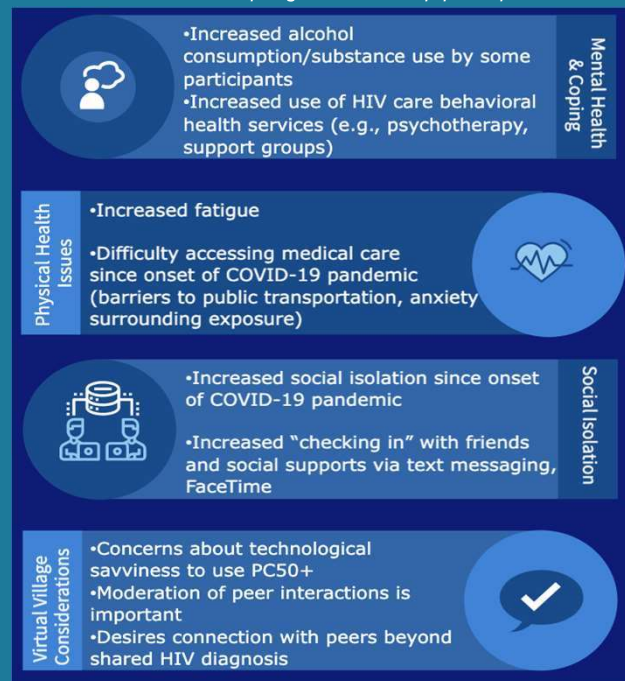
Results

| Characteristics (N = 84) | n (%) | Education level | |
|---|-----------------|---|------------|
| Age, mean (range) | 60.8 (50-82) | Bachelor's degree or higher | 38 (46%) |
| Study site [focus group; interview] (% total) | | Some college | 22 (26.4%) |
| Los Angeles, CA | [19;9] (33.3%) | High school diploma or equivalent | 8 (9.2%) |
| Palm Springs, CA | [23;10] (39.3%) | Did not complete high school | 10 (11.5%) |
| Tampa, FL | [15;8] (27.4%) | Other (trade, vocational, etc.) | 6 (6.9%) |
| Race/ethnicity | | Daily e-mail & internet use | |
| Black / African American | 28 (33.3%) | Use email or internet at least once a day | 75 (89.3%) |
| Hispanic or Latino/a/x | 13 (15.5%) | Have > 1 social media account or dating app | 56 (66.7%) |
| White | 40 (47.6%) | PHQ-2 | |
| Other | 3 (3.6%) | Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless more than half the days or nearly every day | 15 (17.9%) |
| Gender identity | | Little interest or pleasure in doing things more than half the days or nearly every day | 19 (22.6%) |
| Man | 67 (79.8%) | | |
| Woman | 17 (20.2%) | | |

Preliminary Themes from Focus Groups & Interviews

“For us seniors, the one deadliest thing is isolationism.”

-Palm Springs Focus Group participant



Conclusions

- Social isolation and depressive symptoms common among participants
- An elevated percentage of daily internet use suggests that an online platform holds promise to improve social connection and depressive symptoms among older PLWH

Limitations

Conducting interviews via Zoom excluded people who have low e-literacy

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