



People Living with HIV/AIDS Over 50 in the Boston Eligible Metropolitan Area



In 2009, JSI Research and Training Institute (JSI) conducted a comprehensive service needs assessment of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH) for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Office of HIV/AIDS and the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) HIV/AIDS Services Division. The study was based on a two-phase survey that included a broad range of questions to assess the need for and barriers to services, experiences living with HIV/AIDS, quality of life, stigma, and self-sufficiency.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

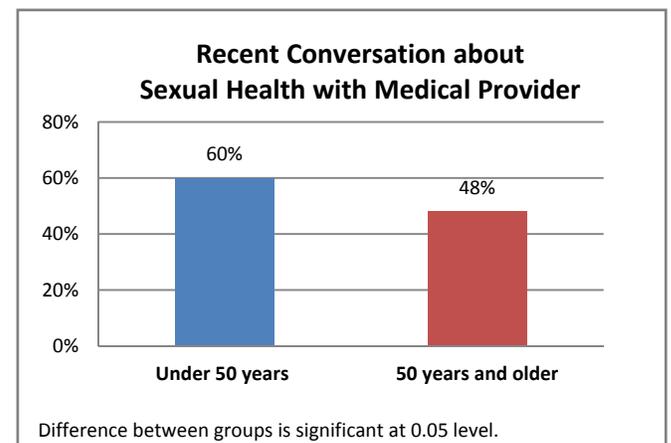
Many differences between older and younger PLWH were explained by the length of time since HIV diagnosis, rather than age of the respondent. The following were significant differences related to age.

- Medical providers were less likely to **discuss sexual health** with PLWH age 50 and older than with younger PLWH.
- PLWH age 50 and older were less likely than younger PLWH to report **experiences of HIV-related stigma**.
- PLWH age 50 and older were less likely than younger PLWH to have had a potential **substance abuse problem** at the time of the survey.
- Among those with a **recent mental health diagnosis**, PLWH 50 and older were less likely than those under 50 to report that they had used **professional mental health services** in the prior six months.
- PLWH age 50 or older had **more health complications** than those who were younger. Specifically, those 50 and older:
 - Had more co-morbidities or chronic conditions
 - Were less likely to have said their health status was “excellent.”
- PLWH age 50 or older were **more adherent** to their HIV medications than those under 50.

A total of 5,060 Phase I surveys were distributed and 1,791 were completed and returned; 1,339 lived within the Boston EMA. Of the 1,791 who completed the Phase I survey, 1,528 volunteered to take the longer, Phase II survey, and 1,066 were completed and returned; 763 of lived in the Boston EMA. Complete details on the survey samples, including extensive demographic data, are described in the *Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire HIV/AIDS Consumer Study Final Report*.

Nearly one-half (46%) of survey respondents were age 50 years or older. Because effective treatments have enabled PLWH to live longer, additional analyses were conducted to identify potential differences between younger and older respondents, focusing specifically on PLWH over 50.

This fact sheet highlights the significant findings identified by the analysis. A summary report of the PLWH over 50 analyses, as well as the *Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire HIV/AIDS Consumer Study Final Report*, are available at www.bphc.org/aids.



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