



Community-based research exploring HIV, housing & health

Housing Discrimination Affects Health

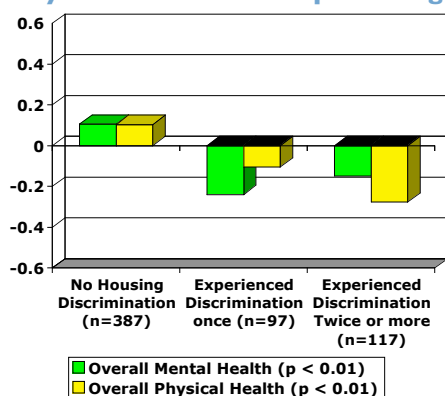
When people living with HIV do not face stigma when looking for a place to live, they are more likely to have stable housing. They are also physically and mentally healthier than people who experience housing discrimination. People living with HIV who have stable housing with support services are less likely to feel that they have been discriminated against than those who have stable housing without support services or people in unstable housing situations.

The Challenge

Stigma and discrimination are still keeping people with HIV from affordable, appropriate housing:

- about 1 out of 3 has experienced discrimination trying to find housing, and 1 out of 5 reported more than one type of stigma in their search for housing
- discrimination is mainly related to sexual orientation (11%), HIV status (13%), employment status (12%) and income (14%)
- people are more likely to experience housing discrimination if they are Aboriginal or live in Eastern Ontario

Impact of Housing Discrimination on the Mental and Physical Health of People Living with HIV



Some Solutions

What can support workers in AIDS service organizations do to reduce or prevent housing discrimination?

- **Talk to clients about their rights:** it is against the law for landlords to discriminate against people based on race, sexual orientation, gender, HIV status, or physical or mental disability.
- **Educate housing providers:** talk about human rights law and the impact of discrimination on the health and well-being of people with HIV.
- **Advocate for more affordable housing** for people on social assistance or disability insurance.
- **Advocate for more supportive housing:** work with local housing providers to provide housing and support services that are stigma-free and respect the dignity of everyone living with HIV.

For more information, go to healthyhousing.ca. *Positive Spaces, Healthy Places* is the first longitudinal community-based research initiative in Canada to examine housing and health in the context of HIV and AIDS. It is following people with HIV from across the province to learn more about their housing status, the housing options available to them, and the factors that affect housing access and stability. *Positive Spaces, Healthy Places* is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Ontario HIV Treatment Network, the Wellesley Institute, the AIDS Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Ontario AIDS Network.

About Positive Spaces, Healthy Places

The HIV, housing and health research project is a collaboration among:

- people living with HIV -- who are peer research assistants as well as research participants
- community-based AIDS organizations
- HIV-related supportive housing services
- academic researchers
- government policy makers from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Our Objectives

Through *Positive spaces, Healthy places*, the partners will:

- describe the current housing status of people living with HIV/AIDS in Ontario
- identify factors that affect the housing stability of people with HIV and the impact that these factors may have on their physical and mental health as well as on their ability to access services, and their use of health care, treatment and social services
- determine whether different populations affected by HIV -- such as Aboriginal communities, ethnocultural communities, women, families, sexual minorities, youth and former prisoners -- have different experiences with housing and/or homelessness
- identify the range of housing and supportive housing options currently available to people with HIV in Ontario
- identify the characteristics of appropriate housing and supportive environments for people with HIV at various stages in the course of the disease
- identify the types of housing options that will help improve access to health care, treatment and social services.

Our Progress

Positive spaces, Healthy places is a three-year study. By December 2006, researchers had recruited and completed baseline, face-to-face interviews with 605 participants. All participants will be surveyed again by phone after six months and face-to-face after 12 months. In addition, 50 participants be part of a qualitative sub-study designed to enhance our understanding of the housing experiences of people living with HIV.

About the Study Participants

The study recruited a mix of participants to reflect the HIV epidemic in each part of the province.

- participants range in age from 20 to 70 (average age: 43)
- 456 are men, 142 are women, 7 are transgendered
- 54% are gay, 8% are bisexual, 36% are heterosexual
- 13% are Aboriginal.



The research team. Back (left to right): ?, Sean Rourke, Amrita Ahluwalia, ?, ?, Michael Sobota, Pius White, Ruthann Tucker. Front: ?, Jay Koonstra

The Research Team

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