To Tell or Not to Tell: changes in Ukrainian older adults' HIV status disclosure behaviours during humanitarian crisis

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Background

Amidst overlapping crises (i.e., the Covid-19 pandemic and full-scale war), HIV care becomes a key concern for older people with HIV (OPWH, defined as ≥50 years). Due to logistical and informational obstacles, OPWH may require support with HIV care from new contacts. We sought to understand longitudinally how the humanitarian crises have changed OPWH disclosure behaviours.

Methods

- Quantitative Survey conducted with OPWH via phone in Kyiv, Ukraine, during **four waves:**
  - Wave 1: May-June 2020
  - Wave 2: January-February 2021
  - Wave 3: January-February 2022
  - Wave 4: May-June 2022
- **Primary outcome**: New HIV status disclosure
- Exposure variables: Living conditions (living alone, not living alone) and HIV care support. Other variables: Age, gender, comorbidities, social support, anxiety, and depressive symptoms (PHQ-9>5 & GAD-7>5), time since diagnosis, and history of addiction (SUD/ AUD).
- **Bivariate and multivariable modelling** were used to identify associated factors related to HIV disclosure.

Results

- In bivariate modelling, having a **history of addiction** and **longer time years since HIV diagnosis** were associated with increased odds of HIV status disclosure
- **Men were less likely to disclose their HIV status than women.**
- Individuals **living alone were less likely to have disclosed** their HIV diagnosis than those who did not.

Mixed Effects Model Result

Variable	Bivariate OR** (95% CI)	p-value	Multivariable aOR*** (95% CI)	p-value
Age	0.97 (0.88 -1.04)	0.30		
Man (woman = ref)	0.28 (0.09 – 0.88)	0.03	0.29 (0.09 – 0.94)	0.04
Living Alone	0.22 (0.08 – 0.65)	0.01	0.29 (0.10 – 0.85)	0.02
HIV Support	1.08 (0.45 – 2.62)	0.85		
Chronic Condition	1.67 (0.71 – 3.95)	0.24		
Anxiety Symptoms*	1.98 (0.79 - 4.99)	0.15		
Depressive Symptoms*s	1.15 (0.49 - 2.75)	0.75		
Social Support (continuous)	0.95 (0.86 – 1.06)	0.36		
History of addiction	3.34 (1.02 – 11.20)	0.04	2.16 (0.67 – 7.00)	0.20
Time since HIV diagnosis	1.11 (1.02 -1.22)	0.02	1.07 (0.98 – 1.17)	0.11

*Binary variable (Mild to Severe) ** Odds Ratio ***adjusted Odds Ratio

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic and war escalations challenged accessing HIV care for OPWH in Ukraine. Gender and living arrangements during the humanitarian crises were key correlates of HIV disclosure. As confidantes fled the war, OPWH experienced heightened levels of psychological distress and were forced to disclose to new supports, with higher disclosure rates over time. Interventions to support disclosure processes among OPWH are needed.