

TREATMENT CHALLENGES AND ASPIRATIONS

TREATMENT CHALLENGES AND ASPIRATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH HIV

“

Meeting the fourth “90” target of improving quality of life among [people with HIV] calls for holistic care that considers patients’ concerns, co-morbidities, priorities, and preferences when starting or switching HIV medication to minimize the impact of HIV treatment on daily life and address unmet needs. ”

de los Rios P *et al.* 2021¹
ViiV Healthcare employee



While antiretroviral therapy (ART) has transformed the lives of millions of people with HIV, treatment priorities and concerns around adherence continue to evolve.^{1,2}

In a holistic model of HIV care, there is more to consider than treatment alone. Understanding the unmet care needs people with HIV have with antiretroviral therapy creates the **opportunity to identify areas of improvement in HIV care.**^{1,3} A myriad of complex unmet psychological, emotional and physical needs can have an effect on treatment in HIV care, **and these may not be discussed with an HCP.**¹

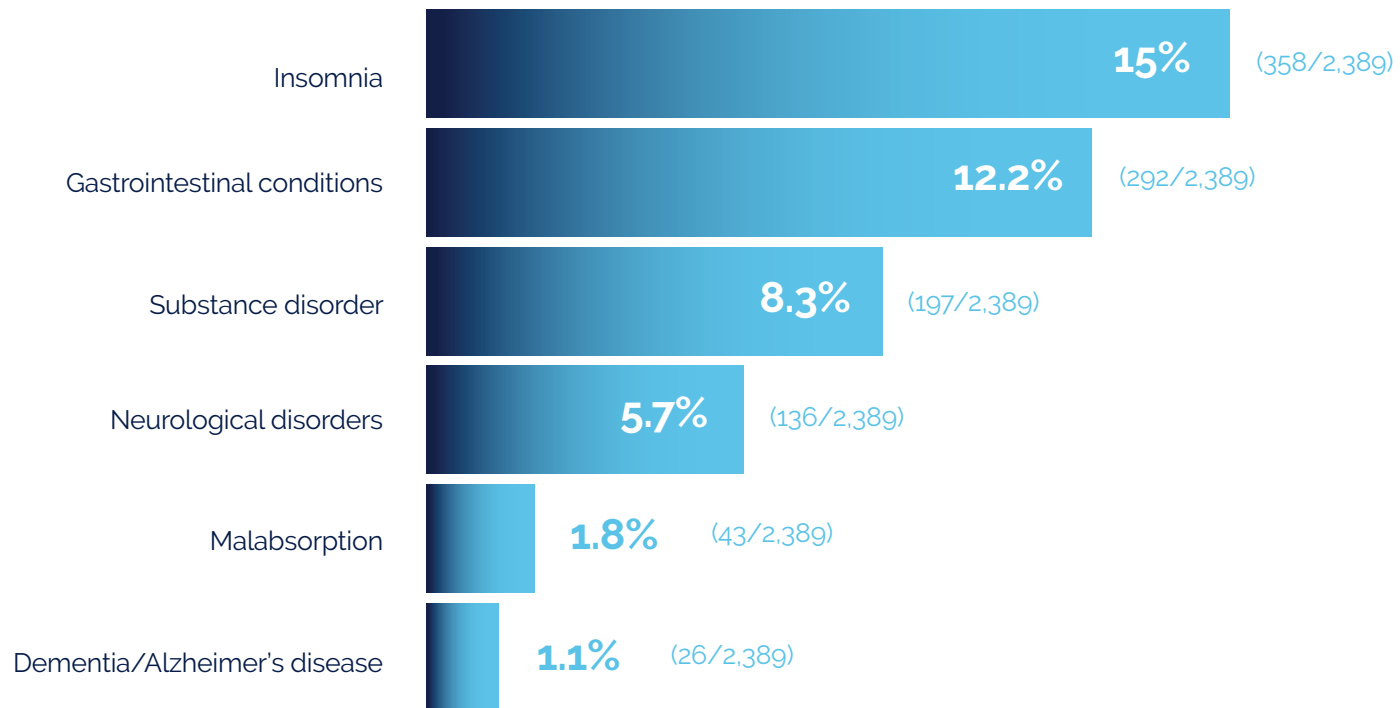
The Positive Perspectives Wave 2 study investigated rates of people with HIV reporting concerns that could affect adherence and their relationship with indicators of health-related quality of life (HRQoL).^{1,2}



PHYSICAL CONCERNS

Data from the Positive Perspectives Wave 2 study showed that people with HIV reported numerous physical concerns that could affect adherence. Globally, among the 2,389 participants, **44% self-reported a non-HIV medical condition that could potentially interfere with adherence to their ART** (participants may have reported >1 condition).¹

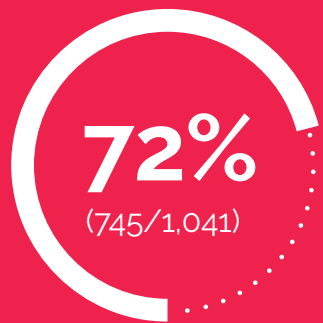
Figure 1. Proportion of people with HIV self-reporting medical conditions with the potential to affect ART adherence (N=2,389).¹



Adapted from de los Rios P *et al.* 2021¹

In addition to medical conditions reported in Positive Perspectives Wave 2, side effects from ART had a substantial impact on ART adherence and HRQoL.¹

Overall, globally, 43.6% (1,041/2,389) of participants reported experiencing side-effects with their HIV medications, including 30.8% (37/120) of the Australian subgroup.^{1,4}



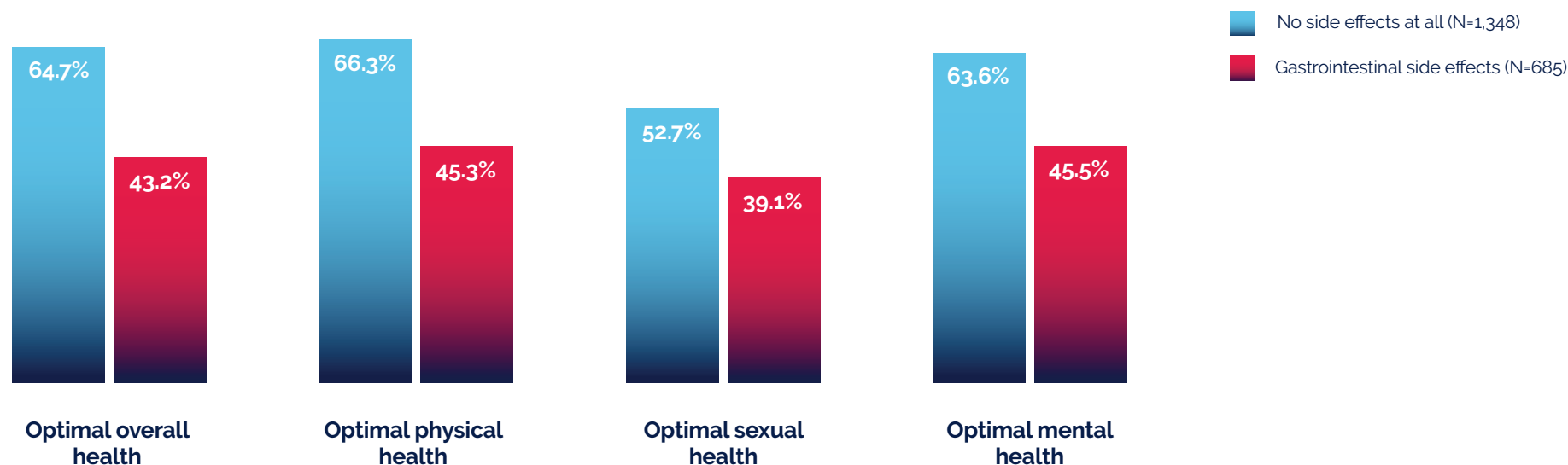
of participants who reported experiencing side effects from their HIV medication indicated that they impact their daily life.¹



Among the global Positive Perspectives Wave 2 population, **the proportion of people with HIV who missed ART ≥ 1 time in the past month was significant and almost twice as high among people with HIV who reported experiencing side-effects** than those who did not (35.2% [366/1,041] vs 16.8% [226/1,348]; $p < 0.001$).¹

In particular, the 28.6% (685/2,389) of **people with HIV who reported experiencing gastrointestinal side effects were found to also report significantly lower indicators of HRQoL** compared to people with HIV without side-effects ($p < 0.001$).¹

Figure 2. Comparisons of self-rated health by reported gastrointestinal side-effects, global population (N=2,389).

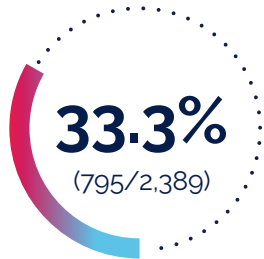


All comparisons $p < 0.001$ based on χ^2 tests.
Adapted from de los Rios P *et al.* 2021.¹

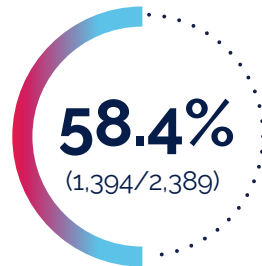
Within the Australian subgroup (n=120), 30.8% (37/120) reported currently experiencing ART side effects, and of these participants 56.8% (21/37) reported experiencing gastrointestinal side effects.⁴ **Participants who experienced side effects were also significantly more likely to be worried about long-term side effects** (86.5% [32/37] vs 53.0% [44/83]; $p = 0.002$) **and their overall wellbeing** (75.7% [28/37] vs 51.8% [43/83]; $p = 0.014$) than participants who did not report side effects.⁴

EMOTIONAL CONCERNS

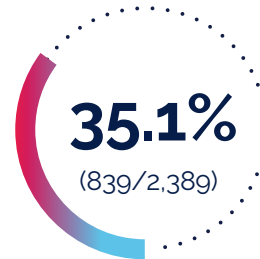
In the Positive Perspectives Wave 2 global cohort, participants acknowledged emotional concerns that could affect their daily oral ART, including:¹



"Having to remember to take my HIV medication every day causes me stress or anxiety"

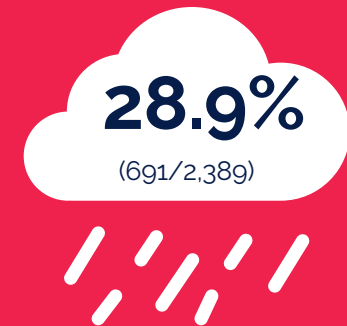


"Taking pills for HIV every day is a daily reminder of HIV in my life"



"Taking pills for HIV every day is a link to some bad memories from my past"

The relationship between these perceptions and optimal overall health was also investigated, and **each emotional concern was significantly associated with at least a 39% reduction in odds of reporting optimal overall health** compared to participants who did not report the same emotional concerns (p<0.05, reported vs not reported for all concerns summarised on this page).¹

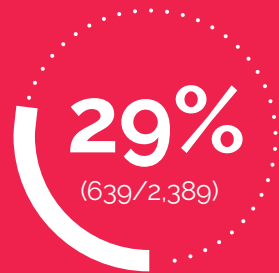


28.9%
of people with HIV
felt that taking their HIV medication
limited their day-to-day life.¹

PSYCHOSOCIAL CONCERNS

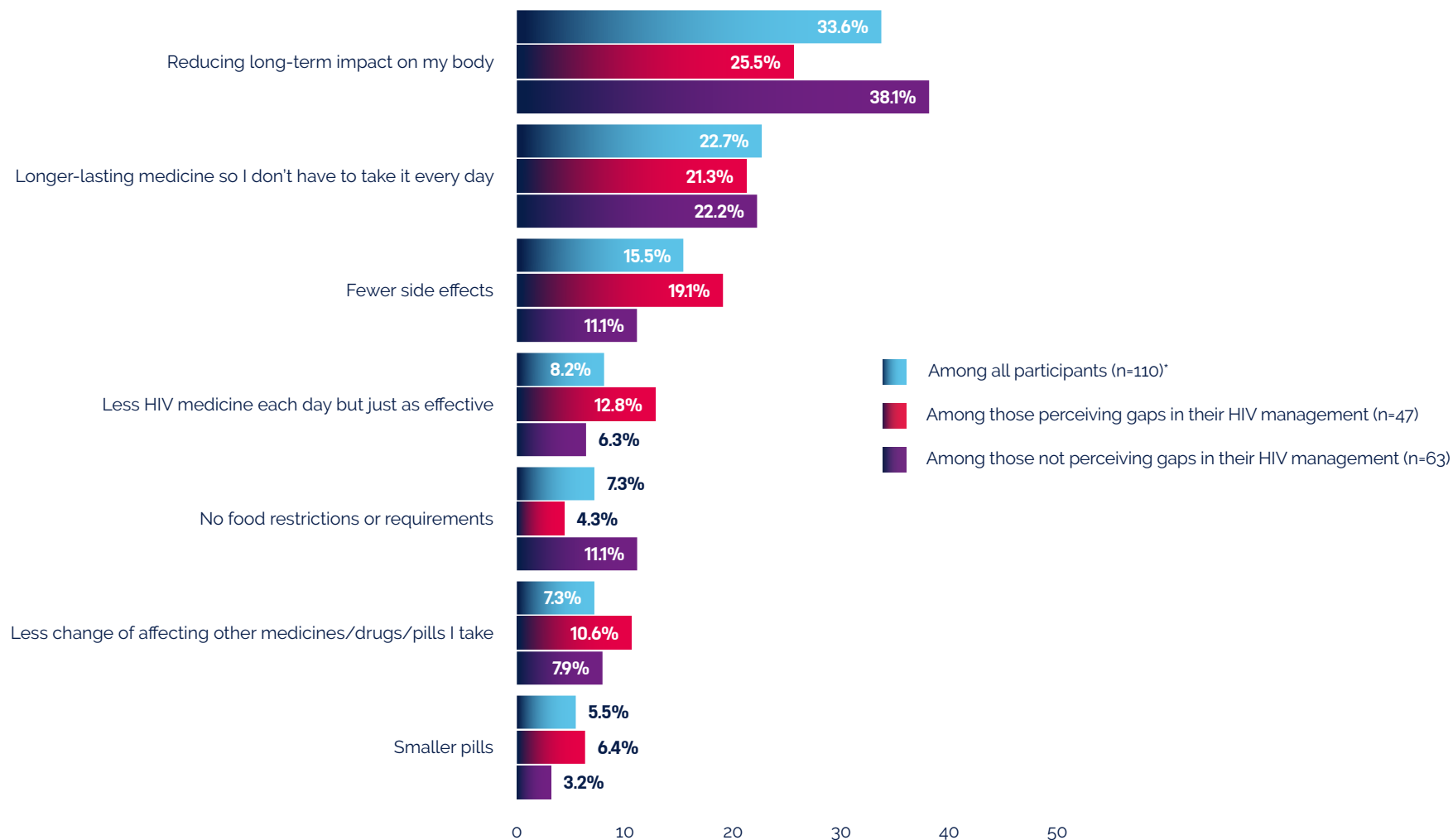
Participants in the Positive Perspectives Wave 2 study reported numerous psychosocial concerns related to ART adherence. **Disclosure of HIV status was a prominent concern**, with 57.9% (1,383/2,389) of people with HIV reporting that they disguised or hid their ART to avoid sharing their HIV status, and 37.9% (906/2,389) were worried daily ART meant a greater chance of revealing their HIV status.¹

People with HIV concerned about daily ART leading to unwanted disclosure of their HIV status were significantly more likely to disguise or hide their ART within the past 6 months, compared to people with HIV who were not worried (79.1% [717/906] vs 44.9% [666/1,483]; $p < 0.001$).¹



of the global cohort reported missing ≥ 1 dose of ART within the past 30 days because they "were not in a situation where they felt comfortable taking their pills"²

Results from the Australian cohort showed variation in treatment aspirations.⁴ Study participants ranked which improvements to HIV medicines were most important to them.⁴ **The highest ranked attribute among all participants was reduced long-term impact on their body (33.6%),** and the lowest was smaller pills (5.5%).⁴



People with HIV in Australia also reported aspirations about their treatment, **84.0% (84/100) of participants who were satisfied with their current ART also expressed optimism that future advances in HIV care would improve their health.**⁴

*10 participants in the Australian sample did not respond to this survey item.
Adapted from Allan B *et al.* 2021⁴

ADDRESSING CONCERNS THAT IMPACT ADHERENCE FOR HIV

The findings from the Positive Perspectives Wave 2 study create **a clear picture of the ART adherence concerns people with HIV face**. Improving quality of life for people with HIV calls for holistic care.¹ Considerations when starting or switching ART may include comorbidities, concerns, preferences, and priorities of people with HIV.¹ The goal of this holistic approach is to address the unmet needs of people with HIV and reduce the impact of treatment on their daily life.¹

People with HIV in Australia who were fully involved in treatment planning with their HCP reported significantly lower suboptimal ART adherence than those neither fully informed nor involved (12.1% vs. 31.6%; $p < 0.05$).⁴

In daily practice, **proactively discussing concerns of people with HIV that may affect adherence** could help identify treatment regimens that align with life and health goals.²

Identifying the physical, psychological and social health concerns of people with HIV may be a positive first step in starting conversations that address these concerns. Tools like the PozQoL which provide a validated measure of QoL, may be a useful approach.³

See how the PozQoL scale can be used to help foster open and active dialogue between HCPs and people with HIV

[Read more](#)

References:

1. de los Rios P *et al.* *AIDS Behav.* 2021; 25(3): 961–72.
2. ViiV Healthcare. Positive Perspectives Study, Wave 2 Results Report. June 2021.
3. Lazarus JV *et al.* *Nat Commun.* 2021; 12(1): 4450.
4. Allan B *et al.* *Popul Med.* 2021; 31: 1–14.

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This study could not have been completed without people living with HIV who have generously shared their time, experiences, and bodies, for the purposes of this research. Much of the fight against HIV and AIDS relies upon people living with HIV continuing to put themselves forward and this research and our fight against HIV and AIDS is indebted to those past and present.

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