



Center for Psychosocial Health
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Disclosure, Stress, and Depression's Relationship to Negative Self-Image in People Living with HIV/AIDS

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Background

- In addition to the physiological impact of having HIV/AIDS, there are psychosocial implications such as perceived stigma, perceived stress, and symptoms of depression.
- HIV-related perceived stigma can contribute to negative self-image in people living with HIV/AIDS (PLH).
- Self-image is influenced by social interaction. A PLH's self-image is influenced by how they are accepted with their disease.
- Individuals who have not disclosed their HIV status report feeling isolated, depressed, anxious, and alienated (Crandall et al, 1992)
- Disclosure is a complex behavior which can weigh heavily on PLH. On one hand, disclosure can result in support and assistance, while on the other, it can produce ostracism (Josephson et al, 1997)

Hypotheses

- The more people living with HIV disclose their HIV status to a close supportive group, the more their perceived negative self-image will decrease.
- As PLH report increased levels of stress they will also report higher levels of negative self-image.
- As PLH report higher levels of depression they will also report higher levels of negative self-image.

Method

Instruments

HIV Stigma Scale (Berger et al., 2001, reliability alpha=.95).

Measures the stigma perceived by people with HIV by assessing four different dimensions of stigma: Negative Self-image, View of Public Attitudes, Disclosure, and Personalized Stigma.

40 Items. 4-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 4= strongly agree)

- Negative Self-image**, e.g.- "I feel guilty because I have HIV."
- View of Public Attitudes, e.g.- "Most people with HIV are rejected when others find out."
- Disclosure, e.g.- "Telling someone that I have HIV is risky."
- Personalized Stigma, e.g.- "I worry that people may judge me when they learn that I have HIV."

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) (Radloff et al., 1977, reliability alpha=.89)

Rates the degree to which the participant has been experiencing depressive symptoms.

20 Items. 4-point Likert scale (0= rarely or none of the time, 3= most or all of the time)

- e.g.- "I had crying spells."

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen et al., 1983, reliability alpha=.88).

Measures the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful.

14 Items. 5-point Likert scale (0= never, 4= very often)

- e.g.- "In the last month, how often have you felt nervous/stressed?"

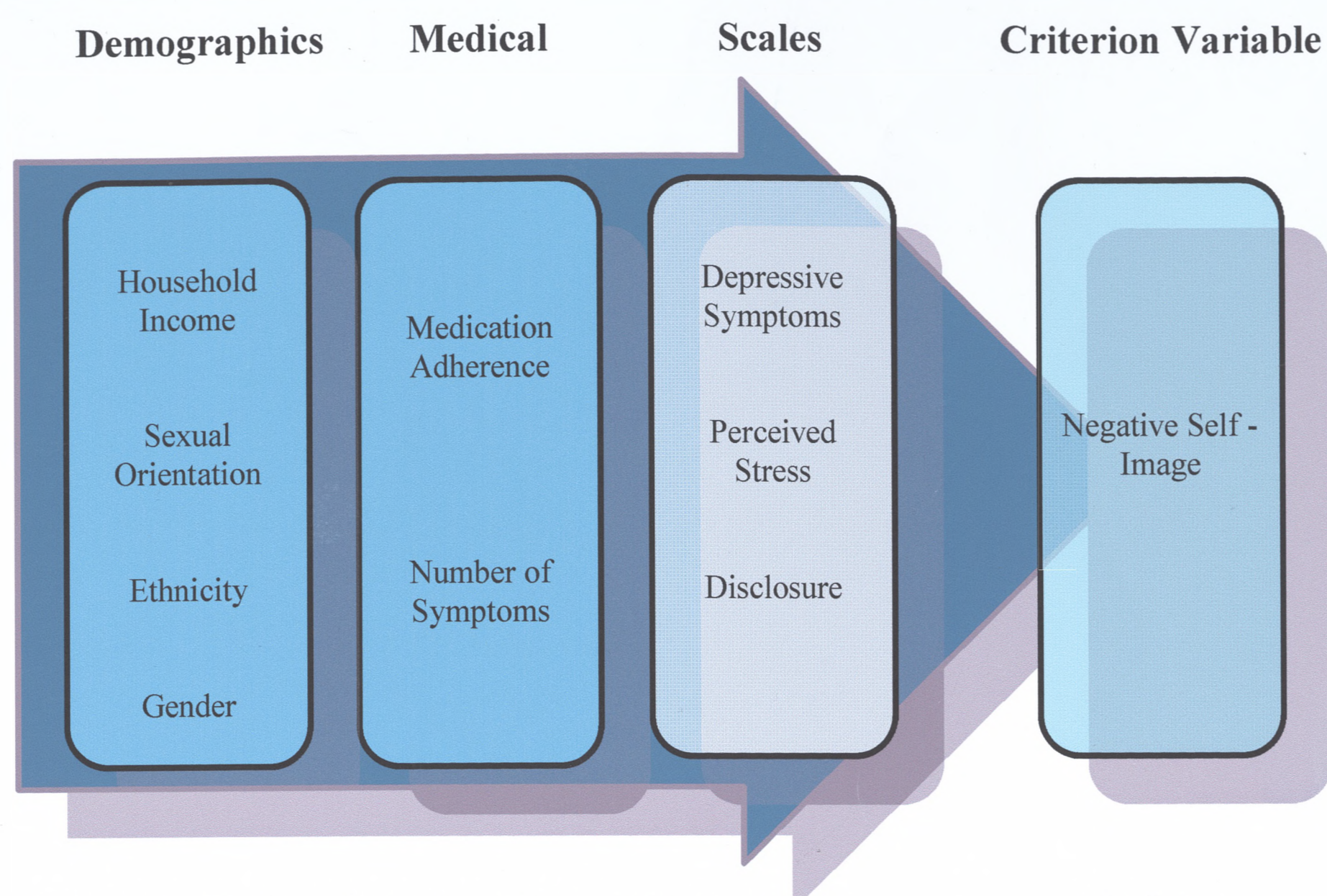
Decision to Disclose Scale (Bauman et al., reliability alpha=.93)

Measures whether or not participants disclosed to their mother, father, brothers, sisters, or best friend.

21 Items. 2-point dichotomous scale (0= no, 1= yes, 99= n.a.)

- e.g.- "Did you choose to disclose to your mother."

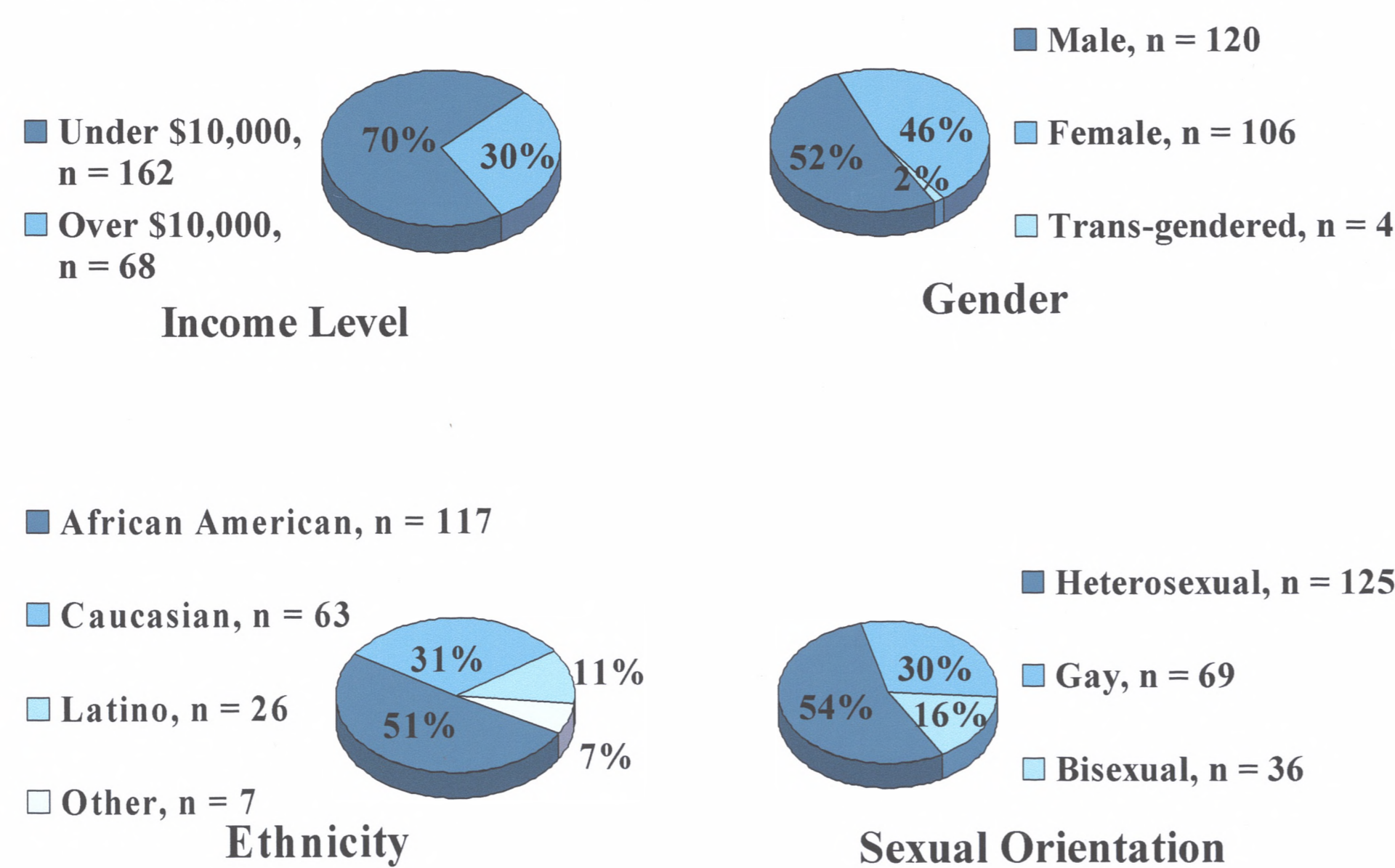
Model



This survey-based study used a cross-sectional correlational design.

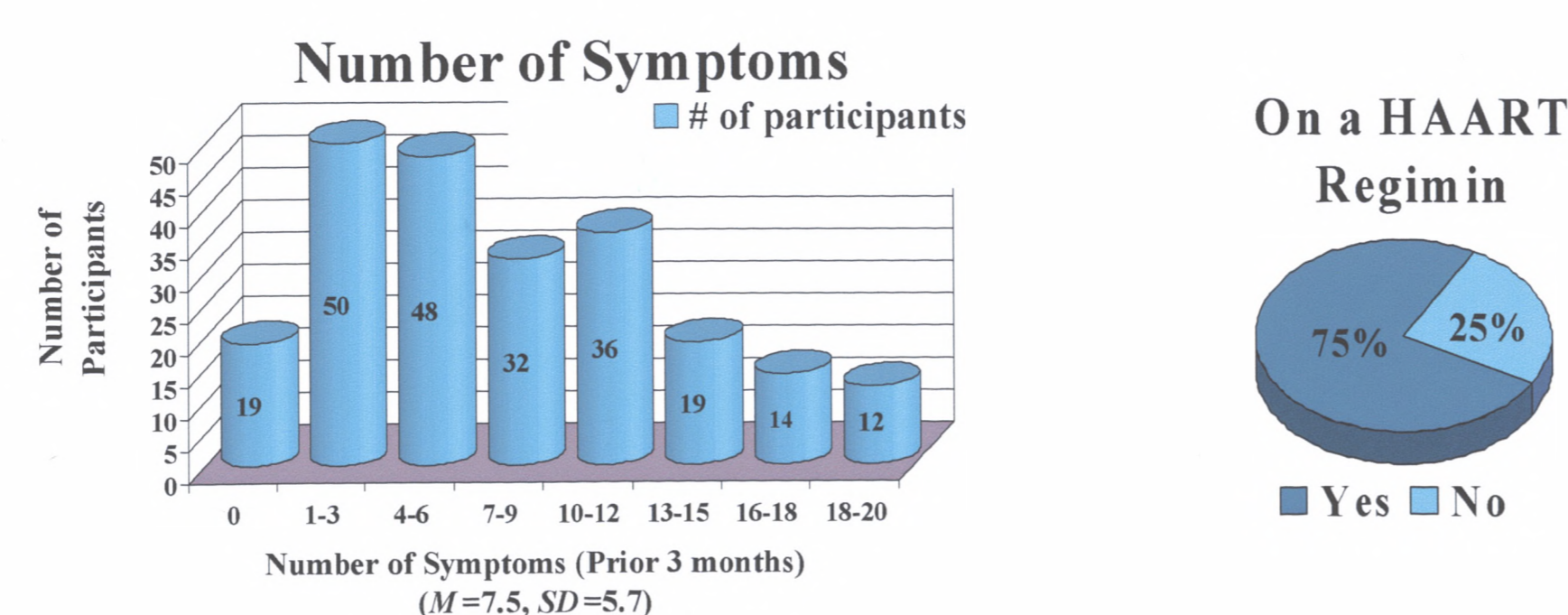
Participants

Demographics N = 230



Measures: Demographic Questionnaire

Medical Variables



Measures: Medication Adherence Questionnaire (Chesney et al., 2000), HIV Symptom Checklist (StatEpi Coordinating Center)

Results

Univariate Statistics

	Mean	Std. Dev	Range
Stress-(PSS) Perceived Stress Scale	20	6.5	1-40
Depression-(CES-D) Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale	23	13	0-80
Disclosure- Decision to Disclose Scale	.9	.30	0-1
Negative Self-Image- (HIV Stigma Subscale)	30	9	13-52

Correlation Matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Sex	----												
2. African American?	Ns	----											
3. Latino	Ns	-.36**	----										
4. Heterosexual	Ns	Ns	Ns	----									
5. Gay	-.57**	-.21**	Ns	Ns	----								
6. Bisexual	-.15*	Ns	Ns	Ns	-.28**	----							
7. Income	.14*	Ns	Ns	Ns	-.24**	Ns	----						
8. # of Symptoms	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	----					
9. Anti-retroviral Meds.	Ns	-.15*	.14*	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	----				
10. Perceived Stress	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	.33**	Ns	----			
11. Depression	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	.48**	Ns	.61**	----		
12. Non-disclosure	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	----	
13. Negative Self-Image	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	Ns	.14*	.16*	.22**	Ns	.40**	.42**	-.14*	----

† Caucasian was dummy coded as the referent ethnicity.

Ns Not significant

* Significant at the 0.05 level

** Significant at the 0.01 level

Regression Analysis

MODEL VARIABLES	β	t	p
Demographic Variables			
Sex	-.02	-.18	.86
African American	-.09	-1.32	.19
Hispanic	.04	.59	.56
Household Income	.13	2.07	.04*
Heterosexual	-.18	-.41	.68
Gay	-.17	-.41	.68
Bisexual	-.05	-.15	.88
Medical Variables			
Number of Symptoms	.42	.61	.54
Anti-retroviral Medication	-.09	-1.52	.13
Biopsychosocial Variables			
Depressive Symptoms	.24	2.90	.004**
Total Perceived Stress	.23	2.97	.003**
Non-disclosure to best friend or family	-.13	-2.09	.04*

† Caucasian was coded as the comparison ethnicity

* Significant at the 0.05 level

** Significant at the 0.01 level

Dependant Variable: Negative Self-Image - Adj. R² = .22, F(12, 229) = 6.44, p < .001

Conclusions

- A household income under \$10,000 was positively correlated with negative self-image.
- Perceived stress was positively correlated with negative self-image.
- Symptoms of depression were positively correlated with negative self-image.
- Decision to Disclose was negatively correlated with negative self-image.
- Our model explains 22% of the variance in the perceived stigma measured by negative self-image.

Design Limitations

- Only self-report measures were used.
- Interpretations of the results of this study are limited due to the cross-sectional correlational design.
- Limited generalizability since a convenience sample was used and is not likely to be representative of all persons living with HIV and AIDS

Future Research

- Studies comparing the emotional distress experienced by rejection vs. the fear of rejection.
- Studies involving the length of time people with HIV wait to disclose.

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Acknowledgements

- ASOs: AIDS Outreach Center, Catholic Charities of Fort Worth, Tarrant County AIDS Interfaith Network, Dallas Resource Center, AIDS Services of North Texas, Positive Voices
- Center for Psychosocial Health Research Team: Ana Luz Chiapa-Scifres, Sharita Clay, David Dickson, Diana Dolan, Rhonda Elerson, Lyndsi Grover, Robert S. Hilborn, Kaston Kolbachinski, Amber Lasater, Luci Martin, Bob McGarvey, Jessica Mitchell, Melissa Ranucci, Jason Schickedanz, Andrew Scherbarth, Elaine Stephen and Christo Thomas
- Funding for this research was provided by a UNT faculty research grant.

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