

Data From the Positive Perspectives 3 Study Highlights the Continued Need for Expansion of Awareness, Belief and Confidence in U=U

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Background

The Positive Perspectives studies are global surveys that aim to understand the experiences of people living with HIV. These studies highlight the concept of Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U), which means that if someone with HIV has an undetectable viral load, they can't pass the virus to their sexual partners. This idea is backed by lots of evidence, and the World Health Organization supports it.

What treatment was studied here?

This study focused on the idea of U=U. It means that people with HIV who keep their viral load undetectable through medication can't transmit the virus to sexual partners. The study looked at how aware people are of this concept, how much they believe in it, and how confident they feel about it.

What was the purpose of this study?

The main goal of the study was to see how much people with HIV believe in the U=U concept. It also explored how this belief affects their behavior, feelings of stigma, and overall well-being. The study wanted to find out where people are getting information about U=U and how believing in it relates to their health.

Who took part in the study and how was the treatment studied?

The study included 698 people living with HIV from 16 countries across the globe. Participants came from HIV clinics and support groups, and they represented different gender identities: 40% female, 55% male, and 2% transgender. Most were under 50 years old, and 71% had their viral load under control. The study used a survey to gather information.

What are the research findings?

The study found that while 94% of participants had heard of U=U, only 58% actually believed in it. Those who understood U=U felt less stigma and had better mental, sexual, physical, and overall health. Belief in U=U was lower among women, younger people, and those with detectable viral loads. People who believed in U=U were more open about their HIV status with partners, whereas people who did not believe in U=U were more likely to feel lonely or feel that HIV affects their relationships. Moreover, those who did not believe in U=U were more likely to be worried about transmitting HIV (even though their virus is undetectable), having sex without condoms, or being arrested if their partner becomes positive for HIV. Most people heard about U=U from their HIV doctors. However, people were more likely to believe in U=U if they heard about it from other people with HIV, peer educators, HIV organizations, social workers, the internet, social media, and journals.

What does this mean for people with HIV?

Believing in U=U can greatly reduce stigma and improve health for people living with HIV. It encourages them to be open about their HIV status. Sharing U=U information through trusted sources can boost belief and confidence in this idea.

Conclusions

The study highlights the importance of increasing belief in U=U among people with HIV, as it leads to less stigma and better health. Efforts should focus on using trusted sources to spread the U=U message effectively. It is important to tackle the barriers that prevent belief in U=U to improve public health outcomes.

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