

A qualitative survey of attitudes towards HIV among providers of community care in Nottingham.

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Introduction

The majority of those infected with HIV are now expected to reach older age. This may be associated with illness and disability, resulting in a dependence on others to provide care. In the early 1990s a number of papers were published documenting stigma surrounding caring to people living with HIV (PLWH). Despite treatment advances, and reported high levels of empathy to PLWH, stigma remains a significant problem. Concerns regarding discrimination and isolation have been raised, and there is a need for education of care-workers. This study is the first to examine attitudes among healthcare workers in the United Kingdom towards providing nursing care to PLWH.

Aims

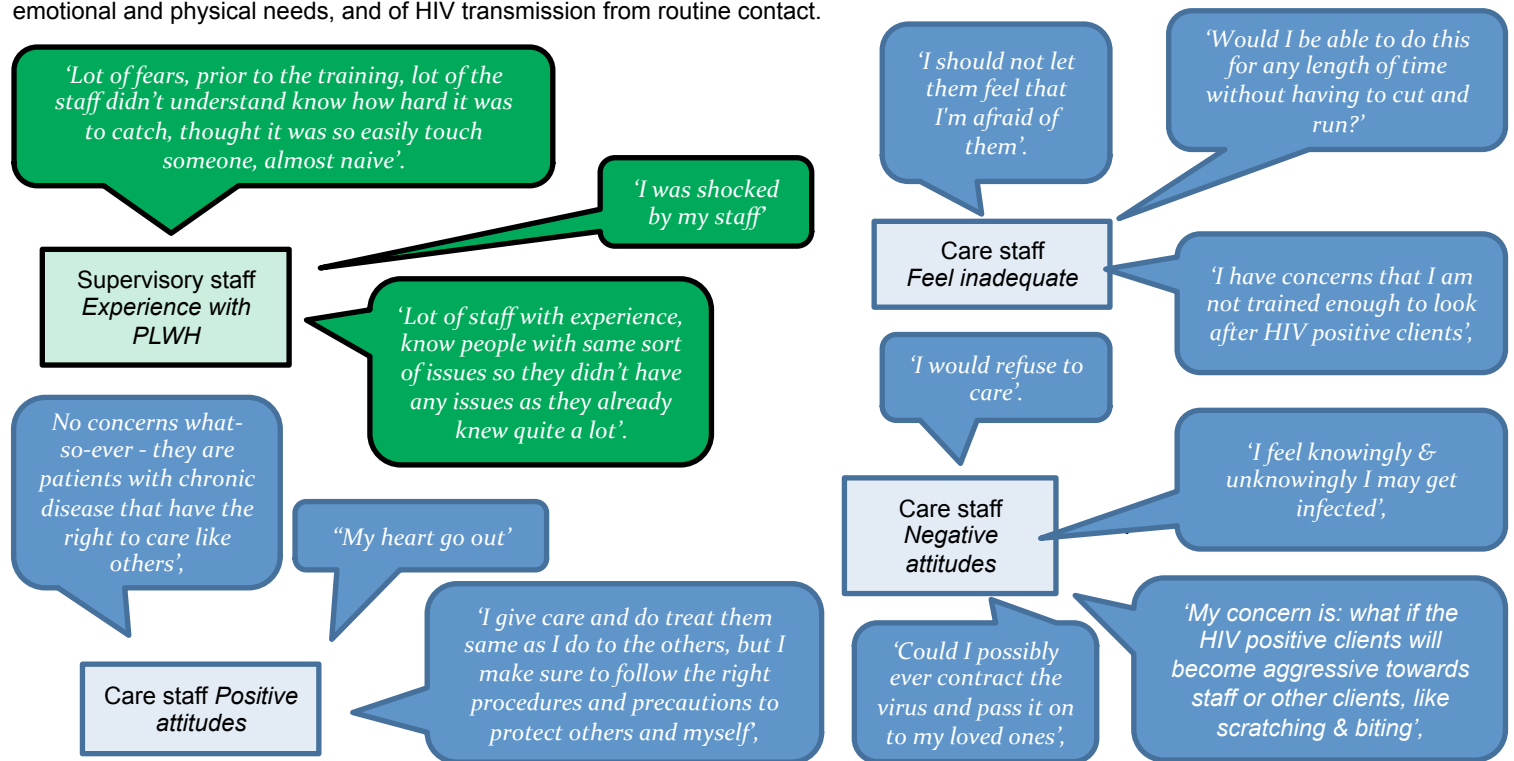
The study aimed to describe the feelings and concerns of potential carers of older people living with HIV in a community care setting; understand the extent to which these may impact care provision; assess basic knowledge regarding HIV transmission and treatment; and identify specific areas where intervention may help improve practice.

Methods

A mixed-methods survey, by interviews and questionnaires, of attitudes and knowledge towards people living with HIV (PLWH), was conducted among healthcare workers from care home and domiciliary services in Nottingham from May to July 2013. Services were identified from the website www.carehome.org.uk and a further four from known contact with PLWH. In-depth interview was carried out with the supervisor and questionnaires provided for distribution to staff.

Results

18 care home and 7 domiciliary supervisory staff were interviewed; 104 care home and 13 domiciliary staff completed the questionnaire. Only 22/117 (18%) answered correctly all questions about transmission by sexual and household contact. While the majority of services and respondents said that they would agree to care for people with HIV, concerns were expressed regarding the ability to care adequately for the emotional and physical needs, and of HIV transmission from routine contact.



Discussion

This study, the first in the UK to explore attitudes among providers of nursing care to PLWH, highlights varied levels of knowledge about HIV and mixed attitudes towards care provision. The majority of respondents were willing to provide care, but a minority had serious misgivings. Training interventions to provide more up-to-date information on risks, survival rates based on newer medications, and attitude shift strategies have a potential to help improve care services for PLWH.

References

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