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**Positive Plus one will:**

- (1) characterize HIV-serodiscordant couples across Canada;
- (2) examine the individual, inter-partner, and social determinants of relationship satisfaction;
- (3) examine links between relationship quality and management of HIV transmission risk;
- (4) assess HIV serodiscordant couples' needs and access to supportive services; and
- (5) document how serodiscordance affects their relationship and everyday life.

**POSITIVE PLUS ONE IS FUNDED BY:**



**CIHR IRSC**  
 Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada



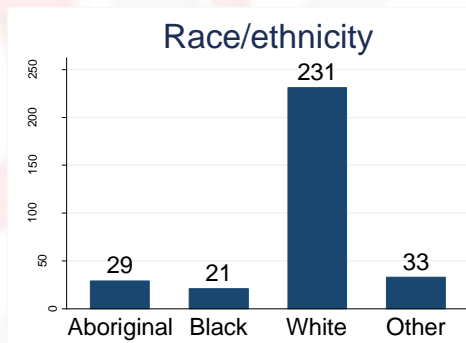
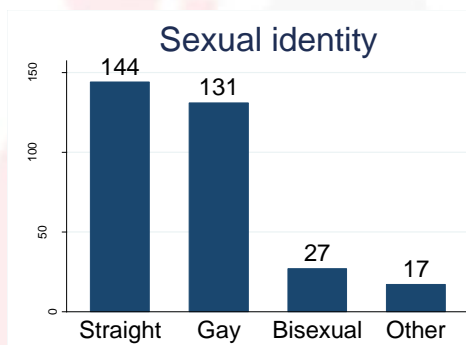
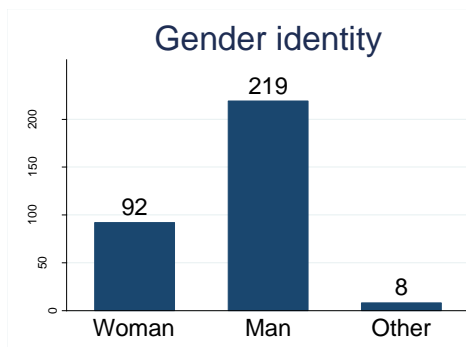
**SRC**  
 Social Research Centre in HIV Prevention

As HIV-positive individuals are living longer lives, more and more people today are in relationships where only one of the two people has HIV (an HIV-serodiscordant relationship). As many as 16,000 HIV-positive people in Canada may be in serodiscordant relationships. While there has been research on living with HIV, far less is known about the issues faced by serodiscordant couples.

This newsletter provides an update on *Positive Plus One* - a national, mixed-methods study of serodiscordant couples. We are calling on you to help us during this next wave of recruitment, to ensure that the diverse voices of many serodiscordant couples are heard.

**People who have taken the survey**

During the first 6 months, 320 persons (185 HIV-positive and 135 HIV-negative) have participated. The sample represents 206 couples, and for 69 of these relationships both partners have completed the survey. Approximately equal numbers are gay and straight. The majority are male and white.



While participants come from all regions we are currently underrepresented, relative to the distribution of people with HIV in Canada, in the following regions: Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta, and BC.

*Note:* In all above, 'other' is a combination of the most infrequently-chosen categories for that question. Most common 'other' category for sexual identity is 'queer'; most common 'other' race status is an Indigenous identity (e.g. 'Aboriginal and white'); for gender, 'other' is a mix of transgendered, and two-spirited.



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The survey not only needs more participants, but more representation across different groups. Without such representation, we will be unable to make regional comparisons, or discuss, in any detail, issues unique to specific groups or relatively-uncommon situations.

### ***Some preliminary findings and presentations***

Positive Plus One presented a poster at the Canadian Association of HIV/AIDS Research (CAHR) in May of 2016, in Winnipeg. The poster showcased the study's innovative design and wide outreach, while inviting HIV/AIDS researchers and service providers to assist with study recruitment.

We have also been accepted to present a poster on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016, at the Ontario

HIV Treatment Network's conference *HIV Endgame I: Closing Gaps in the Care Cascade*, where we will discuss HIV-negative partners in serodiscordant relationships as the missing link in the HIV cascade of care.

Based on analyses prepared for the submission, we found that among HIV-negative partners, 25% had not disclosed their serodiscordant partnership status to their physicians, and 42% had not tested in the past 12 months. If their physician was aware of their relationship, they were more likely to test in the past year (4.5 times the odds of testing). About 90% had not used PrEP, but 59% of those who had not used PrEP would consider using it.

## **PARTICIPANTS EXPRESS A WIDE RANGE OF VIEWPOINTS IN THE SURVEY**

- ***“Our relationship it's great, we respect each other, we laugh, cry, have fun together, and most of all we very much love each other.” (HIV-positive gay man)***
- ***“I think we could have used some counselling at the beginning when it all seemed like a lot to take in and I wasn't sure I was willing to stick it out with her. Lots to learn, no one to really help me see that it isn't so bad...I learn from the internet and there are some good sites out there, but I want to know more about PrEP. It seems to be really expensive and not a realistic option.” (HIV-negative straight man)***
- ***“Stigma is still a big issue, even though transmission is not a reality if you are undetectable. Stigma impacts relationships, negotiation of sex, [and] self-esteem.” (HIV-positive queer woman)***
- ***“My husband is excluded from certain health services and programs based on his HIV-negative status” (HIV-positive gay man)***
- ***“[We need] counsellors just for serodiscordant couples - never had a counsellor who understands what her issues are in the relationship; need to make it more public. Information about PrEP, PEP, etc. – she had not heard of it.” (HIV-positive lesbian woman)***
- ***“Who is out there to help people with HIV positive partners? I feel like I am alone.” (HIV-negative straight woman)***
- ***“There is no counselling for our needs in our area” (HIV-positive straight woman)***



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### **What is next for the study?**

If you are receiving this newsletter, you are someone who is helping us to recruit participants. We thank you for your support and we ask that you please continue to advertise the study and inform people who may be eligible.

On the next page, you will see a list of organizations that are currently helping to promote the study, including your own. **If you have recommendations for other places where we should be promoting the study, please do not hesitate to let us know.**

We will remain in the field until at least the New Year. We will start the **qualitative** component of the study before the end of October.

Although surveys provide us with important information, qualitative interviews will allow people in HIV-discordant relationships to tell the story of how their relationship has unfolded over time, and also allow us to better understand how people across different regions and

backgrounds experience life in serodiscordant relationships.

We strongly believe that the information gathered in this study, from the survey and the interviews, has the potential to make a substantial change in the lives of people in serodiscordant relationships.



### **A person may participate in Positive Plus One if:**

- 1) They are currently in a relationship where one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative and the relationship has lasted 3 months or longer, OR they were in one in the past 2 years,**
- 2) They live in Canada, and lived in Canada during at least part of the relationship,**
- 3) They are at least 18 years old,**
- 4) They speak either English or French,**
- 5) If they are HIV-positive, they have disclosed their status to their HIV-negative partner.**

### **Investigative Team:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Liviana Calzavara (PI, Univ. Toronto)</b>                        | <b>Mona Loutfy (Maple Leaf Medical Clinic)</b>           |
| <b>Dan Allman (Univ. of Toronto)</b>                                | <b>Renée Masching (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network)</b> |
| <b>Chris Aucoin (AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia)</b>                 | <b>Ryan Meili (Univ. of Saskatchewan)</b>                |
| <b>Jean-Guy Baril (Clinique Médicale du Quartier Latin)</b>         | <b>Joshua Mendelsohn (Pace Univ.)</b>                    |
| <b>Laura Bisailon (Univ. of Toronto)</b>                            | <b>Ted Myers (Univ. of Toronto)</b>                      |
| <b>Adam Bourne (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)</b> | <b>Jean-Pierre Routy (McGill Univ.)</b>                  |
| <b>Ann Burchell (St. Michael's Hospital)</b>                        | <b>Shannon Ryan (Black CAP)</b>                          |
| <b>Ken Clement (Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network)</b>               | <b>Stephen Sanche (SHARE)</b>                            |
| <b>Brian Conway (Vancouver Infectious Diseases Centre)</b>          | <b>Stuart Skinner (Univ. of Saskatchewan)</b>            |
| <b>Amrita Daftary (Univ. of Toronto)</b>                            | <b>Kris Stewart (Univ. of Saskatchewan)</b>              |
| <b>Laurie Edmiston (CATIE)</b>                                      | <b>Darrel Tan (St. Michael's Hospital)</b>               |
| <b>Brenda Gladstone (Univ. of Toronto)</b>                          | <b>Donna Tennant (Positive Women's Network)</b>          |
| <b>Terry Howard (Positive Living BC)</b>                            | <b>Wangari Tharao (Women's Health in Women's Hands)</b>  |
| <b>Gary Lacasse (Canadian AIDS Society)</b>                         | <b>Tamara Thompson (Western Univ.)</b>                   |
| <b>Bertrand Lebouché (McGill Univ.)</b>                             | <b>Chris Tsoukas (McGill Univ.)</b>                      |
|   | <b>Jocelyn Watchorn (AIDS Committee of Toronto)</b>      |
|   | <b>Alexander Wong (Regina General Hospital)</b>          |

#### Study staff:

- Sandra Bullock – Project Manager**
- James Iveniuk – Post-doctoral Fellow**

## ORGANIZATIONS PROMOTING THE STUDY

### British Columbia

#### ASOs/NGOs

ASK Wellness Society  
AIDS Network Kootenay Outreach and Support Society  
AIDS Vancouver Island  
Afro-Canadian Positive Network of BC  
Boys and Girls Club of Williams Lake & District  
Heart of Richmond AIDS Society  
Living Positive Resource Centre Okanagan  
Northern BC First Nations HIV/AIDS Coalition  
Positive Living BC  
Positive Living North  
Positive Women's Network  
Red Road HIV/AIDS Network  
The Pacific AIDS Network  
Three Bridges Community Centre - STOP HIV Program  
Vancouver Island Persons living with HIV/AIDS Society  
WINGS Housing Society

#### Clinics

Bute Street Clinic  
Dr. Peter Centre  
Health Initiative for Men (HIM) Health Centres  
Oaktree Clinic  
Vancouver Infectious Diseases Centre

### Alberta

#### ASOs/NGOs

Alberta Community Council on HIV  
Central Alberta AIDS Network Society  
HIV Community Link  
HIV Network of Edmonton Society  
HIV North Society  
HIV West Yellowhead Society  
Lethbridge HIV Connection  
Living Positive Through Positive Living Society of Alberta  
Shining Mountain Living Community Services  
Society Housing AIDS Restricted Persons

#### Clinics

Southern Alberta HIV Clinic  
University of Alberta Hospital

### Saskatchewan

#### ASOs/NGOs

All Nations Hope Network  
OUTSaskatoon Inc  
Persons Living with AIDS Network of Sask, Saskatoon  
Saskatchewan Prevention Institute  
Saskatoon Indian Métis Friendship Centre

#### Other

Mayfair Drugs (33rd street branch, Saskatoon)  
Medicine Shoppe (33rd street branch, Saskatoon)

### Manitoba

#### ASOs/NGOs

Aboriginal Women Responding to the HIV/AIDS Crisis  
Sexuality Education Research Centre of Manitoba  
Sunshine House Inc. Mandate  
The 595 Prevention Team

#### Clinics

The HIV Program - University of Manitoba Health Sciences Centre  
Nine Circles Community Health Centre

### Territories

#### ASOs/NGOs

Blood Ties Four Directions Centre  
Government of Nunavut, Health Centre

### Ontario

#### ASOs/NGOs

2 Spirited Peoples of the First Nations  
ACCKWA  
Action Positive  
AIDS Committee of Durham Region  
AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area  
AIDS Committee of Ottawa  
AIDS Committee of Toronto  
AIDS Committee of Windsor  
AIDS Committee of York Region  
African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario  
Africans in Partnership against HIV/AIDS  
Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention  
Asian Community AIDS Services  
Black CAP  
Braids for AIDS  
Bruce House

#### CATIE

Canadian AIDS Society  
Canadian Working Group on HIV and Rehabilitation  
Casey House Hospice  
Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples  
Chiefs of Ontario  
Elevate NWO  
Fife House  
FrancoQueer  
Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance  
Gilbert Centre  
Good Shepherd Ministries  
HARP  
HIV/AIDS Regional Services  
HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health  
Hamilton AIDS Network  
Hemophilia Ontario  
Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development  
Latinos Positivos  
Maggie's: The Toronto Sex Workers Action Project  
Ontario AIDS Network  
Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy  
PWA Foundation  
Peel HIV/AIDS Network  
People to People Aid Organization  
Peterborough AIDS Resource Network  
Positive Living Niagara  
REACH  
Reseau Access Network  
The 519  
The AIDS Committee of York Region  
The Teresa Group  
The Works

#### Clinics

Crossways Clinic / Jane Street SHC  
Hassle Free Clinic  
The HAVEN Program of Health Sciences North  
Infectious Disease Clinic – Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre  
Maple Leaf Medical Clinic  
Scarborough Centre/Talk Shop  
Somerset West Community Health Centre  
St. Joseph's Hospital HIV Clinic  
Women's Health in Women's Hands

#### Other

Cloud Care Clinics (Pharmacy)  
Club 120  
Oasis Aqualounge  
Ryerson University HIV Prevention Lab

### Quebec

#### ASOs/NGOs

AIDS Community Care Montreal  
Bureau Regional d'action Sida (BRAS)  
Centre Des Roses De L'Abitibi  
Centre Sida-Amitié  
Centre for AIDS Services of Montreal Women  
L'A.R.C.H.E. de L'Estrie  
Maison Plein Coeur  
Portail VIH/Sida du Quebec  
REZO Health and Wellbeing  
Sida-Vie Laval  
Sidaction Mauricie

#### Clinics

Chronic Viral Illness Service, Royal Victoria Hospital/MUHC  
Clinique Médical du Quartier Latin

### Maritimes/Newfoundland and Labrador

#### ASOs/NGOs

ACNS - AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia  
AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador  
AIDS Moncton  
AIDS New Brunswick  
AIDS PEI Community Support Group  
AIDS Saint John  
African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes  
Ally Centre of Cape Breton  
Direction 180  
Healing our Nations  
Mainline Needle Exchange  
Northern AIDS Connection Society

#### Clinics

Halifax Sexual Health Centre  
Memorial University Hospital  
Nova Scotia Health Authority  
Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre  
Saint John Regional Hospital Infectious Disease Clinic  
The Moncton Hospital HIV Clinic