

A Stakeholder Consultation and Needs Assessment to Develop Rights-Based Practice and Policy Guidelines to Reduce HIV-Related Stigma in Healthcare Settings (SCNA-HIV)

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Background

It is widely acknowledged that stigma in healthcare settings adversely impacts on the health and well-being of people living with HIV (Feyissa et al., 2019). Although 27% of PLHIV in Ireland have reported experiencing stigma in healthcare settings (HIV Ireland, 2017), and some of the challenges faced have been qualitatively documented (Vaughan et al., 2020), HIV-related stigma in Irish healthcare settings has not been measured previously.

Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the research was to identify the needs and priorities of people living with HIV and health and social care practitioners in addressing HIV-related stigma in healthcare settings in Ireland.

The objectives of the research were:

1. To measure HIV-related stigma in healthcare settings among i) healthcare workers and ii) people living with HIV
2. To gather rich qualitative data on HIV-related stigma from people living with HIV and other stakeholders
3. To work collaboratively with people living with HIV and other stakeholders, including healthcare workers, to make policy and practice recommendations to address stigma in healthcare settings.

Design and Methods

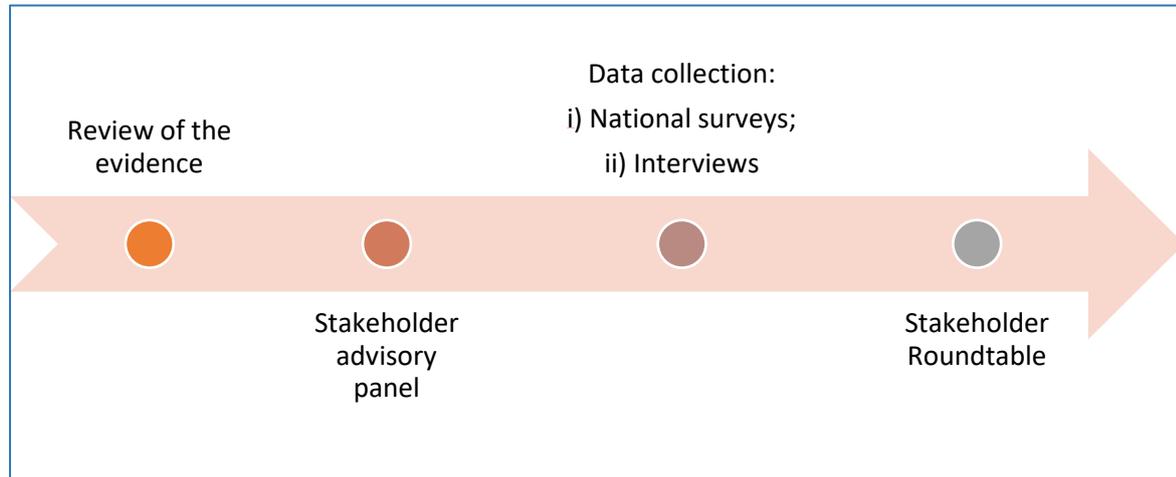
The project was structured in several phases as outlined in figure 1.

Two national surveys aimed at healthcare workers and people living with HIV were conducted. Questionnaire items were adapted for the Irish context with input from a stakeholder advisory panel.

Interviews were subsequently carried out with people living with HIV; health workers, HIV support service providers; and a policy-maker.

Preliminary findings were presented at a stakeholder roundtable in order to collaboratively generate recommendations.

Figure 1



Findings

Participants in the surveys included 298 healthcare workers and 98 people living with HIV. Sixteen people participated in the interviews and a further fifteen participated in the roundtable. The findings indicate that stigma in healthcare settings in Ireland remains a significant problem. Stigmatising behaviours from healthcare workers appear to mostly be driven by anxieties about occupational infection. Policy and practice recommendations have been generated.

Dissemination

A report has been prepared for HIV Ireland, who were partners on this study.

Patient Public Involvement

A stakeholder panel including people living with HIV advised on this project. People living with HIV were also involved in the Roundtable.

Knowledge Translation

Preliminary findings and lessons learned were shared at invited presentations in 2022 at the Fast Track Cities conference in Seville and at the European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) Standards of Care Meeting in X. Further KT activities are planned for 2023.