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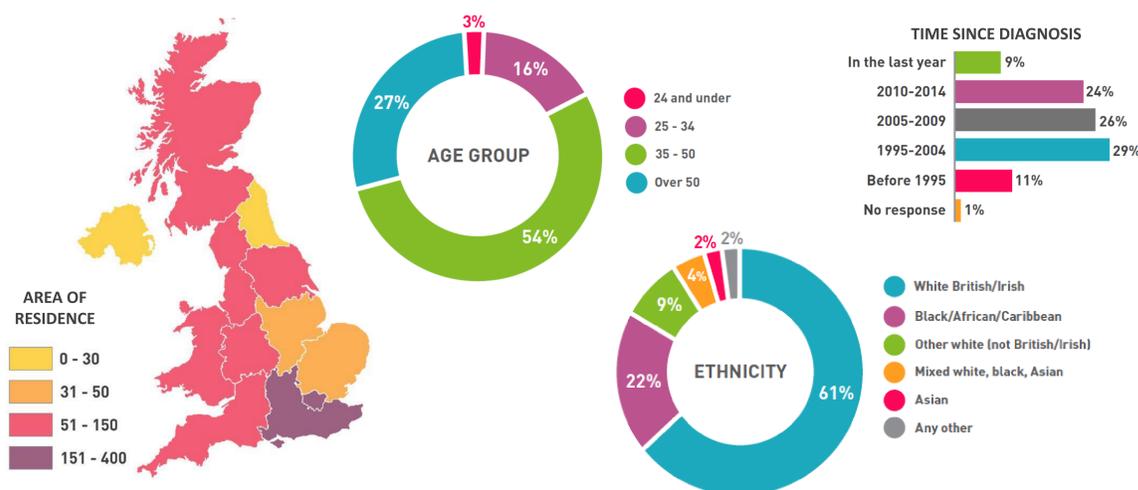
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Background

- **The People Living with HIV Stigma Survey UK 2015** is a collaborative, community-led initiative that captures the feelings and experiences of living with HIV today.
- A total of **1,576 people** recruited from 120 community organisations and 47 HIV clinics throughout the United Kingdom (UK) completed an anonymous online survey. Responses were stored securely and analysed at Public Health England with active community engagement.
- **Psychological resilience is a measure of the ability to appropriately adapt to stress and adversity.** Low resilience is linked to clinical depression and anxiety. Questions from the validated Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC 10) were included in the survey, and a composite score was created for respondents who had answered more than 7/10 questions.

Who took part?

Participants broadly represented the demography of people accessing HIV care in the UK.



THE PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV STIGMA SURVEY UK 2015

“I was diagnosed with a CD4 count of 10. My CD4 was in between life and death, it’s a thin line... Life is wonderful, I make the most of what I have”

“I do not feel I require others’ acceptance or approval. I do not feel this status fundamentally changes the person I am but my willingness to believe in myself as undiminished has required of me to dig deep within and be courageous”

“HIV doesn’t exist in a vacuum, it feeds on things that are already there. There was already a lot of internalised stigma before I had HIV. I wasn’t comfortable with my sexuality, with myself”

“My HIV diagnosis made me turn my life into a positive empowering experience”

“I don’t feel bad at all about my HIV”

Results

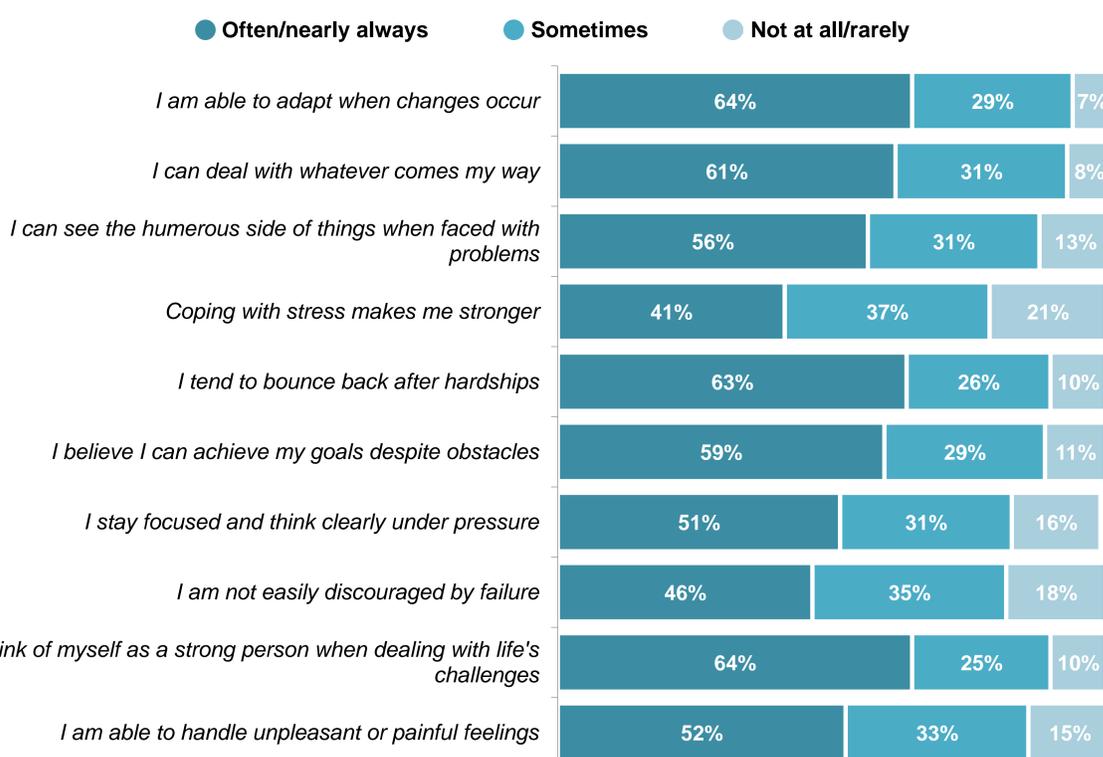
Figure 1 shows the majority of responses to the CD-RISC resilience questions were positive; **64% were often or nearly always able to adapt to change** and **63% to bounce back after hardship**. One exception was the question “Coping with stress makes me stronger” where over half (58%) responded not at all, rarely or sometimes.

Using a cluster analysis technique, respondents’ composite resilience scores were categorised as having low, medium or high resilience; these groupings represented 27%, 39% and 34% of respondents, respectively.

Those with low resilience were more likely than those with high resilience to have been **diagnosed with depression** (71% vs 22%) and to have experienced **social discrimination** (verbal/physical abuse and exclusion) (46% vs 23%), **anxiety** (53% vs 24%) and/or **avoiding social/sexual experiences** (54% vs 32%) (all p<0.001); furthermore, **avoidance** was more likely to be attributed to their HIV than other factors (34% vs 19%, p=0.001).

Thematic analysis of participants’ experiences of living with HIV identified that those with low resilience most commonly reported “**social isolation**” and “**negative experiences**”, whereas those with high resilience focused on “**adopting healthier behaviour**” and “**empowering experiences**”.

Figure 1: Resilience among people living with HIV in the last 12 months (CD-RISC 10 scale)



Conclusions

- **The majority of people living with HIV in the UK scored highly on resilient measures.** However, participants with low resilience were more likely to experience stigma and to report negative experiences of living with HIV.
- Greater support is still required for people living with HIV in the UK who feel socially isolated; the CD-RISC resilience questionnaire could be used in clinics and/or community settings to identify needs and provide extra support.

Acknowledgements

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