

# data BRIEFS

## Terminology

Study participants who got into HIV medical care within the first six (one to six) months following their HIV-positive diagnosis (n1=562) were categorized as **linked** to care. Other participants (n2=198) were categorized as **not linked** (i.e., had experienced an **initial delay** in care). The rest (n3=104) could not be categorized due to missing data.

## Linkage to HIV Care and Initial Delays 2013 Access to Care Needs Assessment

### ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

We split the data (N=864) into three parts—those who were linked (n1 = 562), those who were not linked (n2 = 198), and those who could not be categorized due to missing data (n3=104)—then compared those who were linked (n1) with those who were not (n2).

The variables on which study participants were compared included:

- Sex, age, race, education and homelessness
- Mode of transmission
- Years since HIV-positive diagnosis
- Use of substances

### DEMOGRAPHICS

	Linked (n1=562)	Not Linked (n2=198)
Age 25-44	32.38%	28.79%
Age 45-65	58.54%	60.61%
Wasn't homeless	81.19%	84.09%
Federal poverty level (FPL):		
0-100% FPL	78.65%	75.63%
101-250% FPL	16.37%	16.81%
HIV-positive for...		
0-15 years	66.01%	56.06%

### BACKGROUND

In 2013, the Quality Management (QM) team of the Ryan White HIV Care Services Section at the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) contracted with Collaborative Research to collect data on access to HIV care in Ohio. A sample of 889 HIV-positive Ohioans were surveyed, 881 of whom provided usable data. For this data brief, data from the transgender category were not included in the analysis due to the small number of respondents when breaking data out by additional variables (age, race, etc.). We have used data on the remaining 864 participants to find out how long it takes PLWHA (people living with HIV/AIDS) to enter into care following an HIV-positive diagnosis.

### Did you know...

Education, sex and race did not appear to be predictive variables for linkage to HIV care. The more useful variables included age, number of years since HIV-positive diagnosis and use of some substances.

### Race of Study Participants Who Experienced a Delay in Care (n2=194 due to 4 missing)

Race	Count	Percent
Black/African-American	99	51.03%
White/Caucasian	73	37.63%
Other	22	11.34%

### FINDINGS

We found that level of education, sex and race were not associated with whether or not a PLWHA was linked to care. However, age, homelessness and number of years since the HIV-positive diagnosis were significant. With age, for instance, PLWHA who were not linked were mostly older folks, 60.61 percent being in the 45-65 age category alone. Another 28.79 percent of the group was 25 to 44 years old.

# Why... was there a delay in linkage to HIV medical care?

I felt overwhelmed	24.34%
Didn't know where to go for care	19.08%
I was in denial about my diagnosis	14.47%

## Initial Delay in HIV Medical Care

562 study participants (i.e., 73.95% of 760) indicated that they had been **linked** to care within six months following their HIV-positive diagnosis. The other 198 (26.05%) were viewed as having experienced an **initial delay** in care. And 104 participants had missing data.

# Reasons for the Initial Delay

## REASONS IN DETAIL

Below, we are focusing on the 198 study participants who were categorized as having experienced an initial delay in HIV medical care. We asked them why they had experienced that delay and they responded as follows:

	Count (n=152; missing=46)	Percent
I felt overwhelmed	37	24.34%
I didn't know where to go for care	29	19.08%
I was in denial about my diagnosis	22	14.47%
I felt healthy	14	9.21%
There were no doctors near me	7	4.61%
I was depressed	7	4.61%
I couldn't afford it	5	3.29%
I didn't think I needed medical care	4	2.63%
I could not get an appointment	4	2.63%
I was using alcohol/drugs	4	2.63%
I didn't like the way I was treated at the testing site	2	1.32%
No need for medication	1	0.66%

## Where Study Participants Live/Stay

Community	Linked (n1=562)	Not Linked (n2=198)
Urban	65.78%	65.66%
Suburban	23.53%	23.74%
Rural	10.16%	10.61%

## A TYPICAL PLWHA WITH AN INITIAL DELAY IN CARE...

- Is one we have considered to be "not linked"
- Is 45 to 65 years old (60.61% chance)
- Is male (75.76% chance)
- Is not homeless
- Is most probably from a city or suburban community
- Travels approximately 14.5 miles to medical appointments

## After receiving the HIV positive diagnosis,

- Felt overwhelmed (24.34% chance)
- Did not know where to go for care (19.08% chance)
- Was in denial about the diagnosis (14.47% chance)

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

- By comparing the "linked" group to the "not linked" group, we are trying to find out why some PLWHA do not access HIV care in a timely manner. Care providers need to be aware of characteristics that may be delaying the onset of positive outcomes.
- The reasons for initial delays in care did not directly include the affordability factor.
- The need for support and referral services should be further explored.



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## Questions and feedback

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## Linkage and Gaps in Care: Toward Issue Three

Of the 562 study participants who had been **linked** to medical care within six months following their HIV-positive diagnosis, 158 (28.11 percent) had experienced one or more **gaps** in care (see Issue One). In Issue Three, we will explore this idea of gaps in HIV care.