

data BRIEFS

Terminology

Study participants were categorized as having experienced a **gap in care** if, since starting treatment for HIV/AIDS, there had ever been a 6-month or longer time period during which they had not received care.

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the Quality Management (QM) team of the Ryan White HIV Care Services program 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 whether, since starting treatment for HIV/AIDS, there had ever been a 6-month or longer time period during which the participant had not received HIV medical care, and the reasons for such gaps in care.

Out of the 864 participants, 266 indicated having experienced a gap in care. Here, we focus on these 266 participants, of whom 23 percent were female and 77 percent male.

Gaps in HIV Medical Care 2013 Access to Care Needs Assessment

ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

We split the data (N=864) into two parts—those who had experienced a gap in care (n1 = 266) and those who had not (n2 = 598), then compared the results.

Gap Status by Sex (N=864)			
	Sex		
	Female	Male	Total
Had No Gap	139 16.09%	459 53.13%	598 69.21%
Had a Gap	62 7.18%	204 23.61%	266 30.79%
Total	201 23.26%	663 76.74%	864 100.00%

Study participants were compared on several variables, including sex, age, race, education, homelessness, mode of HIV transmission, years since HIV-positive diagnosis and use of controlled substances.

Comparing Study Participants by Race With/out a Gap (n=852; 12 have missing data)

Race	Gap Status		
	No Gap	Gap	Total
Black/African-American	261 30.63%	124 14.55%	385 45.19%
White/Caucasian	278 32.63%	115 13.50%	393 46.13%
Other	52 6.10%	22 2.58%	74 8.69%
Total	591 69.37%	261 30.63%	852 100.00%

Where Study Participants Live/Stay

Community	With Gap	No Gap
• Urban	63.91%	65.49%
• Suburban	22.93%	21.94%
• Rural	13.16%	11.89%

Why... were there gaps in HIV medical care?

I felt overwhelmed	38.37%
I couldn't afford it	12.79%
I didn't know where to go for care	11.24%

Gaps in Care

Out of the 864 study participants, 598 indicated that, since starting treatment for HIV/AIDS, they had never experienced a 6-month or longer period during which they had not received HIV medical care. The remaining 266 (31 percent) had experienced one or more such **gaps in care**.

Reasons for Gaps in HIV Care

REASONS IN DETAIL

Of particular importance to HIV Care Services were the reasons for gaps in HIV care.

	Count	Percent
I felt overwhelmed	99	38.37%
I couldn't afford it	33	12.79%
I didn't know where to go for care	29	11.24%
I didn't want anyone to know	21	8.14%
I was using alcohol/drugs	19	7.36%
I could not get an appointment	15	5.81%
I felt healthy	10	3.88%
Various other reasons	32	12.40%

If affordability is an important factor in discussions on gaps in care (12.79 percent), it is not the most important one.

More important is the sense of being overwhelmed (38.37 percent).

The need for support and referral services should be further explored.

Comparing Study Participants With/without a Gap on Education (n=857 due to 7 missing data)

Education	Gap Status		
	No Gap	Gap	Total
High School and Below	253 29.52%	116 13.54%	369 43.06%
Some College, No Degree	208 24.27%	91 10.62%	299 34.89%
College Degree or Higher	134 15.64%	55 6.42%	189 22.05%
Total	595 69.43%	262 30.57%	857 100.00%

During the past 90 days, have you used...

	Gap	No Gap	Difference
Tobacco	53.69%	43.20%	10.49%
Crack	8.04%	1.56%	6.48%
Marijuana	35.56%	32.04%	3.52%
Alcohol	55.51%	54.01%	1.50%
Cocaine	10.76%	10.38%	0.38%
Speedball	4.55%	4.33%	0.22%

Note: The differences are greatest for tobacco (10.49 percent), crack (6.48 percent) and marijuana (3.52 percent).

Have you ever received a mental health diagnosis?

Gap group	61.07% Yes
No gap group	52.69% Yes

A TYPICAL PLWHA WITH A GAP IN CARE...

- Is male (76.69% chance)
- Resides in an urban or suburban community (86.84%)
- Is aged 25 to 65 years (89.48% chance)
- Travels an average of 15 miles to HIV medical care appointments
- Received HIV-positive diagnosis 14 years ago
- Does not have a college degree (79.00% chance)

Questions and feedback

on this data brief can be emailed to the Ohio Department of Health

(ODH) at:

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CONCLUDING REMARK

When investigating gaps in HIV medical care, we found the following variables to be particularly useful:

- Number of years since HIV-positive diagnosis
- Having had a mental health diagnosis
- Use of such substances as tobacco, crack and marijuana (the reasons for this were not investigated)



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