Vocational Rehabilitation Among HIV+ People in San Francisco

Walter Gómez, MA
Employment and HIV

- People living with HIV are highly susceptible to face employment problems, which is associated with declining physical health.

- Unemployment has been linked to lower HAART adherence and diminished quality of life.

- Individuals with more advanced HIV disease, those experiencing syndemics and persons accessing disability benefits display poorer employment outcomes.
Enrollment and DOR

- 108 participants enrolled
  - December 2010-January 2012

- 92 (85%) completed the 6-month follow-up

- 89 (82%) completed the 12-month follow-up

- 61 clients DOR authorized
  - 22 clients with long-term DOR placements
Demographics

- Age: M = 46.6 (SD = 9.3)
- Time since diagnosis: 14.6 years (SD = 8.4)

Gender: M (98.4%) F (1.6%)

Sexual Orientation: Gay and Bi Men (99.3%) Other (0.7%)

Race/Ethnicity: White (68.5%) Latino (16.1%) Black (13.1%) Multi (2.3%)

Completed At Least Some College: Yes (98.7%) No (1.3%)

Undetectable Viral Load: Yes (96.8%) No (3.2%)

CD4+ > 500: Yes (72.4%) No (27.6%)

Receiving Disability Benefits: Yes (86.7%) No (13.3%)
Syndemics

- Moderate or Severe Depression (33%)
- Substance Use Disorder (33%)
- Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity (50%)
- Any Housing Instability (20%)
Syndemic Burden
Quantitative Analysis

• We conducted GEE analyses, where over a 12-month follow-up, participants reported:

  • Significantly decreased odds of any unstable housing (AOR= 0.21; 95% CI = 0.05 – 0.90; p < .05)
  • Increased odds of being employed at least part-time (AOR = 10.19; 95% CI = 2.40 – 43.21; p < .01)
  • Those not on SSI/SSDI at baseline reported increased personal income (past 6 months): $6,575 to $10,506.
Personal Income

Income (USD Past 6 Mo)

- SSI/SSDI
- No SSI/SSDI

Baseline | 6 Months | 12 Months
Employed at Least Part-Time

- Baseline
- 6 Months
- 12 Months

SSI/SSDI
No SSI/SSDI
Qualitative Analysis

- Structural Barriers
- Social Stigma
- Basic Needs & Prioritizing
Structural Barriers

- Participant Not On Disability

“Oh, well, he just berated me. He said what do you think you are some sort of a slouch? **No, you don't deserve disability**, no, no, no. You're not going to parlay this into some sort of disability claim. So, and that was the end of it. **I never seriously pursued it after that.**” (P078)
Structural Barriers

• Participant On Disability

“I don't like the way our culture views disabled people. [...] They make it difficult. I'm so -- I mean even as a legal person it's difficult for me to keep up with it all [...] It's an oppressive -- it's almost like it's a burden enough to have it, but then you've got the bureaucracy layer on top of it [...] I mean my little inconveniences, personal inconveniences are nothing compared to just all the stuff around it.” (P063)
Social Stigma

- Participant Not On Disability

“I don't want to be on the system. [...] Yeah, so I guess I don't consider myself unemployed until I'm not going to be on long-term disability. [...] You know, I wasn't cracked out, or I wasn't a screaming drag queen -- and nothing against drag queens, or I was in like, some (inaudible), you know, asking for help. Or, you know, and I look like I didn't need help. And my (inaudible) was just a little too much, it's like, I'm sorry. I can't help you. You know, and that's embarrassing when, you know, you have to go stand in line and then you get refused for it the whole time.” (P013)
Social Stigma

- Participant On Disability

“[...]just not being accepted by, you know, the normal working society[...] -- I've definitely heard the put downs and I, you know, I mean, it was very verbal and it was very harsh, like, retarded and crazy and stupid ” (P053)
Basics Needs & Prioritizing

• Participant Not On Disability

“You know, the idea that I will be supported by some government agency at least for a while is not exciting. [...]And it terrifies me, too, and that's an understatement to think that I'm that way or that I'm headed in that direction when, you know, I should have had, yeah, yeah. It's really scary.” (P055)
Basics Needs & Prioritizing

• Participant On Disability

“I have to respect my limitations. My limitations tell me I can't hold down a full time job. And I have to respect that, but a lot of people think I'm just being lazy. And so that's one of the drawbacks of being on disability.” (P056)
Social & Structural Influences on Vocational Rehabilitation

On SSI/SSDI:
- Bureaucratic Limitations
- Experienced Stigma

Not On SSI/SSDI:
- Bureaucratic Gatekeeping
- Anticipated Stigma

Decisional Balance
- Perceived Benefits of the Status Quo
- Greater Sense of Urgency

Outcomes
- Poorer Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes
- Better Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes
Conclusions

- Policy and Programming Implications

- Syndemics

- Role of Providers
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