

# WOMEN HIV & AGING

A FIFE HOUSE LED STUDY 



# Research Team

## Principal Investigators

Dr. Amrita Ahluwalia, Nominated P.I

## Co-Investigators

Dr. Jeffrey Aguinaldo, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Wilfrid Laurier University

Keith Hambly, Executive Director, Fife House Foundation

Joanne Lindsay, Community Member & Peer Mentor

Rajesh Pisharody, Income & Community Liaison, PWA

Art Zoccole, Executive Director, Two-Spirited Peoples of the First Nations

Kay Roesslein, Program Director, Loft Community Services

## Collaborators

Lori Chambers, McMaster University

AIDS Committee of Durham Region

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention

Older Women's Network

## Peer Research Assistants

Marisol Desbiens

Rose Kangabe

# Partnership

- Fife House Foundation
- Toronto People with AIDS Foundation (PWA)
- LOFT Community Services/McEwan Housing and Support Services
- Two-Spirited People of the First Nations
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- Community Members



# Funding & Support

**Funded By:** Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)



**Support:** We acknowledge the support received from Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN)

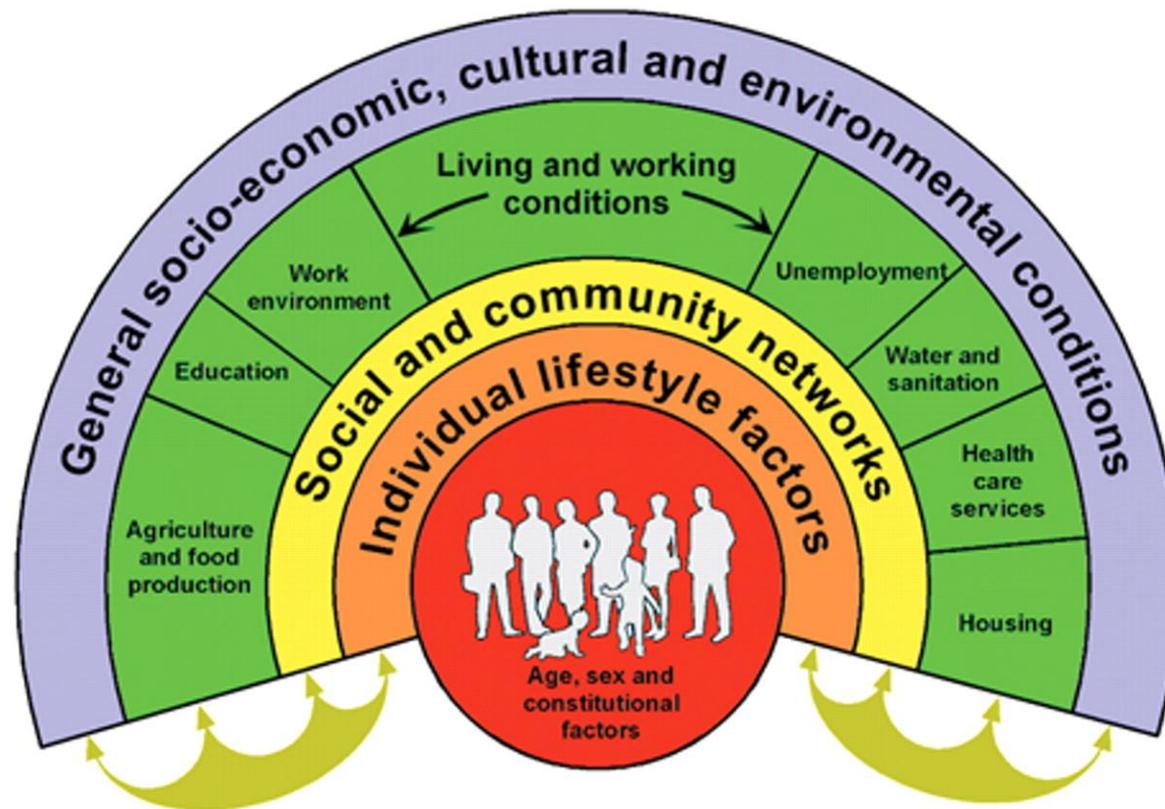


# Outline

- Overview
- Ethics & Methodology
- Issues & Challenges
- Summary of Study Findings
- Recommendations for Housing Providers
- Impact/Outcomes

# Overview

## A Model of the Determinants of Health



Source:

Dahlgren, G. and Whitehead, M. (1991). Policies and Strategies to Promote Social Equity in Health. Stockholm: Institute for Futures Studies.

# People With HIV Without Appropriate Housing Experience Worse Physical And Mental Health

## WORSE PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Higher mortality rates
- Substance use issues
- Have lower CD4 counts
- Have higher viral loads
- Increased likelihood to be hospitalized and use emergency rooms

## WORSE MENTAL HEALTH

- Higher prevalence of depression
- Higher stress levels
- No sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods

# Study Objectives

- To understand the housing experiences of women aging with HIV.
- To identify the individual and structural barriers to social support and health care services that women aging with HIV/AIDS experience.
- To explore the issue of stigma as experienced by women aging with HIV/AIDS.
- To document the variation in experiences of aging aboriginal and visible minority women living with HIV.

# Ethics

- Ethics Approval Received From Wilfred Laurier University



# Methodology

- Community-Based Qualitative Study



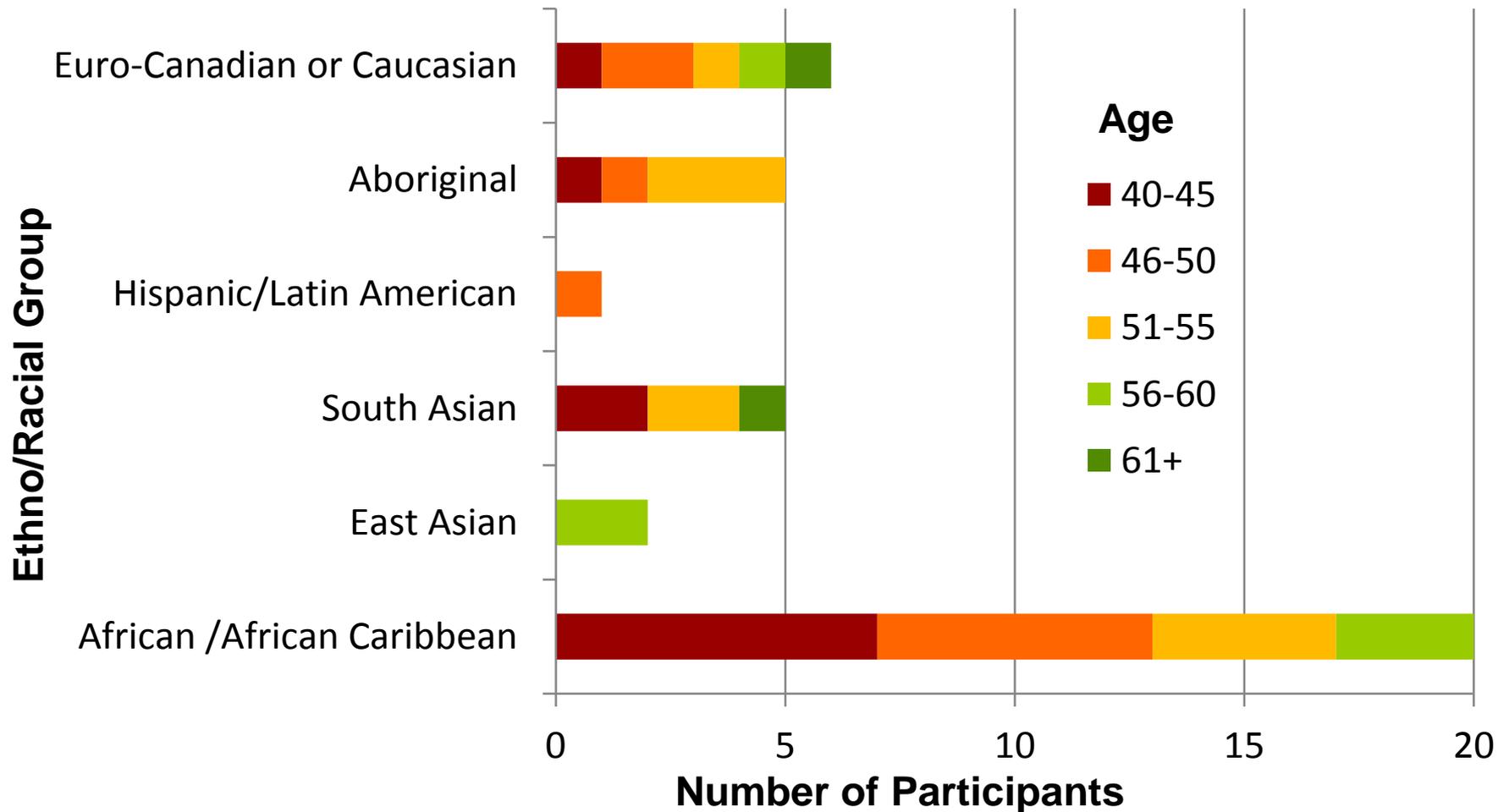
## Participation Requirements:

- Living with HIV
- Identify as a woman
- 40 + years
- Live in Toronto or the GTA

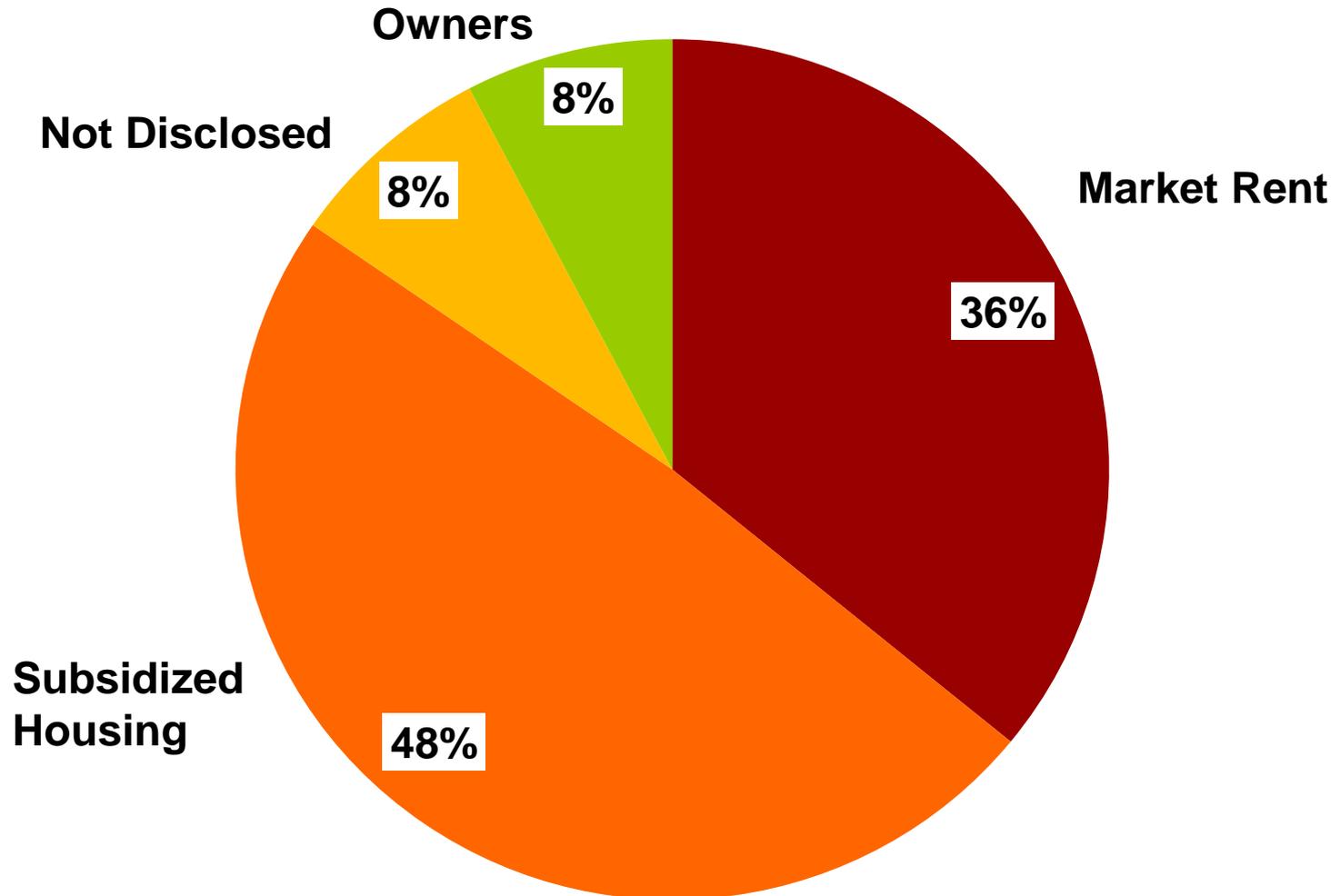
# Methodology

- Time Frame for Data Collection: 0-12 Months
- 39 in-depth Interviews
- Two Peer Research Associates (PRAs) were trained in qualitative data collection methods and interviewing skills.
- Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis

# Age/Ethno-Racial Demographics



# Where Are Participants Currently Living?



# **Women, HIV, Aging & Housing**

**Identifying issues of concern to  
older women living with HIV (50+)**

# Housing Experiences of 50+ Women

## Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Housing

- High rent
- Small spaces
- Lack of cleanliness
- Limited income support
- Safety
- Violent family situations
- Abusive relationships

# Housing Experiences of 50+ Women

## Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Housing

*“I want to move out because I have a child who abuse me so I don’t want to stay there anymore... You know I’m a person who keep everything inside, yeah. If your own son do something to you, where you gonna go to talk about it. Where? You’ll keep it, and you cry, you’re crying crying crying for days,”*

(Participant, 55 years)

# Housing Experiences of 50+ Women

## Reasons for Satisfaction with Housing

- Safety
- Proximity to Services
- Cost
- Cleanliness

# Housing Related Challenges for 50+ Women

## Current Challenges

- Waitlists for subsidized housing
- Affordability
- Health anxieties

## Future

- Anxieties about future health
- Anxieties about mobility/future mobility
- Anxieties about future housing discrimination

# Housing & Health

## Waitlists for Subsidized Housing

*“I need the housing... I put my application into housing connections 10 years ago...and up until now they still do not have a place for me to live. And the place where I live now, every winter time I could not afford the hydro bill...one time it was very cold and...it cost me \$900...so I was totally broke for that year. For the following year, I did not turn it on much...and then ended up with pneumonia. So now I end up with pneumonia every winter time...”* (Participant, 59 years)

# Affordability

*“The only concern the market rent seems to be increasing...and I don't know where I am on the waiting list, so it's a struggle every month...you've got to take care of your mother who's a visitor, she don't have status in this country, and you've got to pay her bills, her hospital and medical bills as well, so when you look at it, it's not easy. It's a challenge.” (Participant, 52 years)*

# Health Anxieties

*“I'm having some major surgery later this year, which will keep me probably bedridden for 3 to 4 months towards the end of the year, so I'm really concerned about possibly getting into better housing situation before my surgery, because then I'm looking at a lot of rehab and physio... funds are really tight, housing is hard, costs are really hard...I can't afford it anymore”*  
(Participant, 51 years)

# Mobility/Accessibility Concerns

*“I continue to have problems with my knees. We live in a place with an upstairs and a downstairs; the bedrooms are upstairs, so I think...(if) issues with my knees get worse then I might have problems going up and down stairs as easily, so I think about that.” (Participant, 51 years)*

# Anxieties About Future Housing

*“So like say now people are living longer, and say if I live until I'm 80 years old, do I have a home, like [a] senior's home? Living with HIV, my concern would be [that] I've seen stigma and discrimination...If I do live longer...what happens if my kids aren't going to take care of me? Am I put into a senior's home, then what happens? We should have something for [older] people living with HIV as well,” (Participant, 52 years)*

# Employment and Financial Constraints

## Employment and Discrimination

*“I have applied for other jobs and you know I don’t get interviews and I find out that they have hired people that are much younger have less education than me and less experience than me and I think how’s that happen” (Participant, 59 years)*

# Isolation, Loneliness and Housing

*“Very expensive [housing] ...it’s a nice area, it’s quiet...it’s a lot better then where I was before... [but] it’s just expensive.... I’m fairly disenfranchised from my family. Everybody is far away from me so I don’t see anybody. I don’t have a lot of friends...so I’m in a new neighbourhood with nobody really and it’s pretty isolating and pretty lonely” (Participant, 56 years).*

# **Women, HIV, Aging & Housing**

**Summary of Study Findings**

# Housing Concerns

## Study Findings

Older women living with HIV struggle with current housing situations and fear their future housing will not be:

- Affordable
- Safe
- Meet their health needs



# Discrimination

## Study Findings

Older women living with HIV face multiple levels of stigma and discrimination

- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age



# Intimate Relationships

## Study Findings

Challenges of forming new intimate relationships include:

- Fear of disclosing HIV status
- Cultural influences and social expectations
- Experiences of past violence
- Aging/negative body image
- Emotional intimacy supersedes sexual intimacy



# Employment & Finances

## Study Findings

### Financial Hardships

- Age impeded access to employment
- Inadequate social assistance
- Age-related discrimination prevents (re)entry into work
- Limited opportunities to upgrade education



# Recommendations

- Housing Service Providers
- Healthcare Service Providers
- Other Service Providers
- Research

# Recommendations

## Housing Service Providers

- Advocate for greater recognition at federal, provincial and municipal levels for affordable housing as well as recognition of health and income assistance issues of older HIV+ women.
- Explore creative solutions to house multi-generational households. Further advocate governments to incentivise construction of such units.
- Explore creative solutions to accommodate accessibility issues of women aging with HIV, within their homes.
- Collaborate with specialized service providers (e.g. geriatric services, mental health) and engage older women in development of their care plan, unique to their needs.
- Collaborate with AIDS Service Organizations and Long Term Care facilities to build an agency culture that is well informed about the issues of older HIV+ women.
- Develop a culturally sensitive process for coordinated access to housing and health care system.

# **Women, HIV, Aging & Housing**

**Impact/Outcomes**

# Housing Providers Partnership

Impact/Outcomes

- New partnership among housing providers: Fife House, Madison Housing and WoodGreen Community Services



# New Housing

## Impact/Outcomes

- If approved, Fife House will be responsible for referring 20-25 families for multi-bedroom units, that will address the issues of multi-generational households for some families.
- Fifteen of the units will be deep subsidy (RGI), and 10 units will be eligible for City of Toronto rent allowance of up to \$400 per unit.



DRAWING LIST	
SHEET NO.	SHEET NAME
R0.00	COVER PAGE
R0.01	STATISTICS
R0.02	STATISTICS
R1.00	CONTEXT PLAN
R1.01	SITE PLAN
R1.02	FLOOR PLANS
R1.03	FLOOR PLANS
R1.04	FLOOR PLANS
R1.05	FLOOR PLANS
R1.06	ROOF PLAN
R2.00	ELEVATIONS
R2.01	ELEVATIONS
R3.00	BUILDING SECTIONS
R4.00	UNIT PLANS - FLOOR 1
R4.01	UNIT PLANS - FLOORS 2 & 3
R4.02	UNIT PLANS - FLOORS 4-8 & 9
R5.00	3D VIEW
R5.01	3D VIEW
R5.02	3D VIEW
R5.03	INTERIOR VIEWS
R5.04	INTERIOR VIEWS

(ADD KEYMAP HERE)

BLOCK 36 RFP

COVER PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ R0.00\_

Scale : \_\_\_\_\_ 25/03/2016 3:26:32 PM



TYPICAL SUITE KITCHEN



TYPICAL SUITE LIVING ROOM



TYPICAL SUITE BEDROOM

(EXAMPLES - TO BE  
UPDATED)

© 2016 Turner Fleischer Architects Inc. All Rights Reserved.



# For Further Information:

Contact: Dr. Amrita Ahluwalia  
Director of Research and Evaluation  
Fife House Foundation  
Tel: 416-205-9888 ext. 225  
Email: [aahluwalia@fifehouse.org](mailto:aahluwalia@fifehouse.org)