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## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON AGING WITH HIV AND INSIGHTS FROM UKRAINE (REVIEW OF THE BOOK “HIV, SEX, AND SEXUALITY IN LATER LIFE”)

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In the wake of the ongoing global viral pandemic, the profound impact of COVID-19 has highlighted the resilience and adaptability of global health infrastructures. However, as we navigate these challenging times, the book "**HIV, Sex, and Sexuality in Later Life**" (Henrickson et al., 2022) was published by Policy Press, Bristol, UK. It redirects our attention to the enduring and intersectional challenges faced by individuals living with HIV, particularly as they age.

The book reflects on the unimaginable notion of chronicling the lives of older individuals living with HIV, a concept deemed unthinkable during the early years of the pandemic. The resilience of individuals, coupled with advancements in research and technology, has defied expectations, allowing people to live longer lives with HIV, even in resource-scarce environments.

As the landscape of HIV has evolved, so too has the bio-sociality of the virus. The book describes the various challenges and issues of ‘greying’ with HIV, contends with the changing dynamics of HIV prevention technologies, acknowledging their insufficiency in overcoming deeply ingrained fears of stigma and rejection. It recognizes the altered realities of a population diagnosed with HIV in later life, challenging ageist erotophobic assumptions that often define older individuals as postsexual.

Drawing on diverse disciplines such as social work, communications, and literature, the anthology embraces various writing styles, including empirical research, personal reflections, and poetry. This eclectic approach is fitting, considering the multifarious, intersectional experiences of older people living with HIV worldwide.

Contributors to this volume hail from diverse backgrounds, both professionally and personally, enriching the anthology with perspectives from Swiss women in 'sexual retirement,' Ukrainian women, Black African migrant women in the UK, gay men in the UK and Aotearoa New Zealand, Hong Kongese gay and bisexual men, and gender and sexually diverse South Asians and Black African women and men living with HIV in Kenya. Despite the diversity, the common thread is HIV, connecting these individuals through their shared experiences of stigma, despair, determination, and the potential for a brighter future.

The book features a pivotal chapter titled «**Everyone is on their own and nobody needs us’: women ageing with HIV in Ukraine**» (Semigina et al., 2022). This chapter provides a poignant exploration of the challenges faced by older women living with HIV, putting a spotlight on the Ukrainian context. In Ukraine, the stigma

experienced by this demographic takes center stage in the meticulous research conducted by Tetyana Semigina, Tetiana Yurochko, and Yulia Stopolyanska.

Their structuralist perspective not only reveals the harsh reality of stigma but also underscores the necessity for tailored education about healthy aging. The findings emphasize the need for comprehensive education, addressing not only the medical aspects of HIV but also the intricacies of the sexual lives of older individuals. This nuanced approach recognizes the complexity of the intersection between aging, HIV, and the individual's experience of their own sexuality.

The invisibilization of older women, a phenomenon illuminated by the research, sheds light on the societal tendency to overlook and marginalize this demographic. Coupled with the challenges older women face in re-engaging sexually after an HIV diagnosis, the study underscores the critical importance of fostering trusting relationships between these women and their medical providers. The chapter serves as a call to action for healthcare professionals to create environments that encourage open dialogue, understanding, and support for those navigating the intersection of aging and HIV.

Moreover, the research conducted by these Ukrainian academicians reaffirms the pervasive nature of stigma across various social work client groups. The lack of empowering interventions to address such stigma, as highlighted in previous Ukrainian studies (Dvoriak et al., 2019; Semigina<sup>2017</sup>; Semigina & Chistyakova, 2020; Semigina & Stoliaryk, 2022), points to systemic challenges that extend beyond individual experiences. These findings underscore the urgent need for holistic strategies and policy interventions that empower individuals and communities, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for those living with HIV.

So, the Ukrainian chapter not only contributes valuable insights to the broader discussion within the anthology but also serves as a catalyst for societal reflection and action. It invites readers to confront the multi-faceted challenges faced by older women living with HIV, urging a collective effort to dismantle ingrained stigmas and implement empowering interventions that resonate beyond Ukraine's borders.

In conclusion, "HIV, Sex, and Sexuality in Later Life" stands as a pioneering work, transcending borders, and offering a nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between aging, HIV, and sexuality. Each chapter adds a unique perspective, creating a collective narrative that challenges stereotypes and amplifies voices often marginalized in discussions of global significance.

Let's consider how the nuanced understanding offered by the book contributes to the broader dialogue on aging, HIV, and sexuality.

In the realm of social work, the profound insights offered by "HIV, Sex, and Sexuality in Later Life" present an invaluable resource for shaping the trajectory of future research, policy development, and activism. The nuanced understanding gleaned from the anthology holds significant implications for social work practitioners and policymakers alike.

From a research standpoint, the diverse narratives presented in the book underscore the imperative for further exploration into the intersectionality of aging, HIV, and sexuality. Social work researchers are prompted to delve deeper into the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups, such as older women living with HIV

in Ukraine, as highlighted in the book. These narratives provide a foundation for targeted studies that can inform evidence-based interventions and support mechanisms tailored to the specific needs of these populations.

On the policy front, the book advocates for a paradigm shift in addressing the stigma associated with aging and HIV. It calls for policies that not only acknowledge the complex interplay of factors but also actively work towards dismantling societal norms that contribute to invisibilization and marginalization. Social work professionals are encouraged to engage in advocacy efforts that champion policy changes promoting inclusivity, destigmatization, and equitable access to healthcare and support services.

In the realm of activism, the narratives presented in the book serve as a powerful catalyst for social work practitioners to become advocates for change. By amplifying the voices of those often marginalized, social workers can play a pivotal role in challenging stereotypes and fostering community resilience. The book acts as a call to action, urging social work activists to engage in community-driven initiatives that promote awareness, education, and the empowerment of individuals living with HIV in later life.

In essence, "HIV, Sex, and Sexuality in Later Life" not only contributes to the academic discourse but also equips social work professionals with the knowledge and inspiration to effect meaningful change. As stewards of social justice, social workers are challenged to leverage the book's insights to drive research agendas, shape progressive policies, and advocate for transformative practices that prioritize the dignity and well-being of individuals navigating the complex intersection of aging, HIV, and sexuality.

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