

Testing the connection between neighborhood cohesion and viral suppression among HIV-positive New Yorkers

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HIV viral suppression is a positive medical outcome which indicates viral control and inability to transmit infection. It is usually achieved through antiretroviral therapy. There is a lack of research into the psychosocial factors affecting HIV viral suppression, such as perceived neighborhood social cohesion, or how connected the subject feels to their neighbors.

To fill this gap, CUNY SPH alumna Ellen Wiewel led an analysis with faculty Luisa Borrell, Heidi Jones and Andrew Maroko and [researchers](#) from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene into whether perceived neighborhood [social cohesion](#) was associated with better medical outcomes among New Yorkers newly diagnosed with HIV infection.

The researchers used data from the New York City HIV surveillance registry, which includes all persons reported with HIV in the city since 2000 and their HIV-related laboratory test results, plus interviews of a stratified random sample of persons who were diagnosed with the virus between 2006 and 2012. Perceived neighborhood social cohesion did not appear to influence achievement of suppression among the 92 persons in the analysis.

"We had data from a relatively small and healthy population, and we weren't able to demonstrate a consistent association between neighborhood social cohesion and [viral suppression](#)," says Wiewel.

Future studies could explore whether cohesion has varying effects on medication adherence among populations of New Yorkers with HIV, and whether cohesion influences maintenance of viral suppression after its initial achievement, Wiewel adds.

More information: Ellen W Wiewel et al. Neighborhood social cohesion and viral suppression after HIV diagnosis, *Journal of Health*

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