

## “Unmasked to a Positive Triumph”: Women With HIV Share the Benefits of Showing Their Faces Through Photovoice

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### What Is the Purpose of This Study/Review?

- To find out why women with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) included selfies among the pictures taken to show what their lives were like.

### What Is the Problem?

- Low-income women with HIV continue to have poor health outcomes and a low quality of life.
- Plans and strategies to improve their health must include their thoughts and experiences to be applicable and appropriate for them.
- Research about a community of people that includes the same community as stakeholders is encouraged because doing so creates a sense of mutual ownership and buy-in from all parties.
- Few participatory research studies exist among women with HIV, but even fewer studies analyze how taking part in such studies affect them as participants.
- Using Photovoice, the women with HIV took pictures to describe their lives.
- Many women chose to include their faces in the pictures and the researchers sought to determine why they made this choice.

### What Are the Findings?

- Partnerships formed among women with HIV, community agencies, and researchers.
- The participatory approach created an atmosphere of safety and allowed the women with HIV to be open with themselves and others.
- Of 33 women with HIV, 14 included their faces in the pictures.
- Reasons for including selfies were to (1) reveal the “real” face of HIV/AIDS, (2) share self-portraits as an act of resistance, and (3) help other women living with HIV.

### Who Should Care Most?

- Researchers who use participatory methods and Photovoice among women with HIV.
- Women with HIV.
- Health care providers.
- HIV care organizations.

## Recommendations for Action

- Continue to include women with HIV in participatory studies that use Photovoice because of the freedom expressed by these participants.
- Institutional review boards should be flexible when seeking to conceal the identity of individuals with HIV who may desire to reveal themselves to others.
- Continue to seek more information on how participants experience and benefit from this collaborative process.