

## **Positive Women: A Women's Health Conference to improve lives of HIV Positive Women using Consultation, Compassion and Care.**

### **Conference Report**

On 14<sup>th</sup> February 100 members of the public, voluntary organisations, NHS staff, DMU students and staff attended a full day with speakers described as “hard hitting” in the evaluation forms. The conference was a good example of collaborative working between the Leicestershire Aids Support Service (LASS) and DMU School of Nursing and Midwifery, and was the first conference that LASS has run since its creation 25 years ago. The conference was sponsored by AbbVie (formally Abbott pharmaceuticals) and a good buffet lunch and post event canapé were provided as well as the conference packs.

Liz Robson (DMU) and Rachael Ng'andwe (LASS) organised and facilitated the delivery of this event using a lecture theatre, rest rooms, and an option for rapid testing of HIV, as well as eight stands for voluntary organisations and university research. There were posters presentations by two members of DMU staff, Joan Konje and Raksha Pandya-Wood. The former highlighted perceptions of Somali women accessing pre-conception and maternity care. The latter illustrating the problems faced when different members of the family are HIV positive or negative.

Simon Oldroyd, associate dean, welcomed everyone to DMU and Frieda Kalumba opened the conference. Patrick Bowe QC welcomed Liz Kendall MP to the conference and gave a short address.

#### Presentations were as follows:

Liz Kendall MP gave the **opening presentation** relating HIV to her constituency and implications for commissioning. There was an enthusiastic response to her questions entailing her making notes on the issues to raise in parliamentary circles.

Dr. Warzi Ibrahim presented **HIV and Women's Health – An update on HIV & treatment**. She gave update on epidemiology and clinical management. She emphasised that HIV is now a treatable, chronic medical condition and the public and health care staff need to be prepared for women living longer with the condition entailing a joint care approach.

Juliet Kisob presented **Positive support for positive women and sharing good practice – An insight into delivering social care to positive women**. She introduced several women who presented the views of service users, and some very emotive accounts were given resulting in some of the audience being visibly shocked at the accounts of care (or lack of) that had been given.

Abena Addo (DMU) presented **Positive women; Positive midwifery** which incorporated ethics with pregnancy care for HIV positive women. Midwifery practice needs to encompass the whole family.

Tendai Ndanga, Coordinator with Ffena, London, presented **Involving Positive Women - providing an opportunity for consultation and change within your model of service delivery**. Here she gave a verbal account of her experiences in London working for a health policy network and gave very insightful, and sometimes amusing, accounts of assumptions that are made.

Maryan Anshoor, Somali Development Services, presented **FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) and HIV – The relationship between them and its impact upon conception, pregnancy and childbirth**.

Here she explained the link between HIV and FGM remains theoretical due to lack of reliable research evidence, and stressed the suffering caused by FGM.

Jenny Hand Chief Executive Officer (LASS) chaired a **panel discussion**, which was so powerful in its impact and emotive when accounts from both audience and panel were given that this ran over time by an hour! As a result many had to depart promptly and there were quite a few canapé left over, which the LASS volunteers were pleased to take away.

Manjoola Sood, Leicester city councillor, gave the **closing remarks** stressing the merits of collaboration and the need to deflect prejudice. Nicky Genders, on behalf of DMU, thanked the audience for attending.

This conference was part of the DMU Care and Compassion initiative, and this theme permeated throughout the day. The evaluations forms showed the conference had been highly successful and demonstrated a need for further events related to HIV and childbearing. For more information, and to see PowerPoint and poster presentations, please visit the care and compassion website [www.dmu.ac.uk/compassion](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/compassion).

A press release was sent to the Leicester Mercury by Liz Kendall's office at the House of Commons which was published on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February under the heading, "**Leicester West MP Liz Kendall HIV patients not helped by NHS shake-up**" see <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/Leicester-West-MP-Liz-Kendall-HIV-patients-helped/story-20681905-detail/story.html>

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