

Background

UK provides peer led support to over 1,000 people each year through information, mentoring, guidance, advocacy, groups and workshops. Our aim is to improve the physical, emotional and social well-being of people living with HIV. This research was designed so we could understand more the role of Positively UK's peer-led service and how it might complement clinical care. Having already collected data from service users we wanted to find out the perception of this service from HCPs from the 10 London Clinics that host Positively UK's peer support outreach workers.

"I think as a result of the in-house peer support, more people are accessing this service. It can be very difficult to people to have the confidence to access any HIV service outside of the clinic"

"Peer support gently helps people to link in with appropriate services that can help them to move on with their lives and feel less isolated and alone"

"the young person's peer support has been a huge success at reaching out to isolated youths who can feel very alone"

"feeling more confident, optimistic about the future and less isolated can help people to feel more able to look after themselves and live a normal life"

Methods

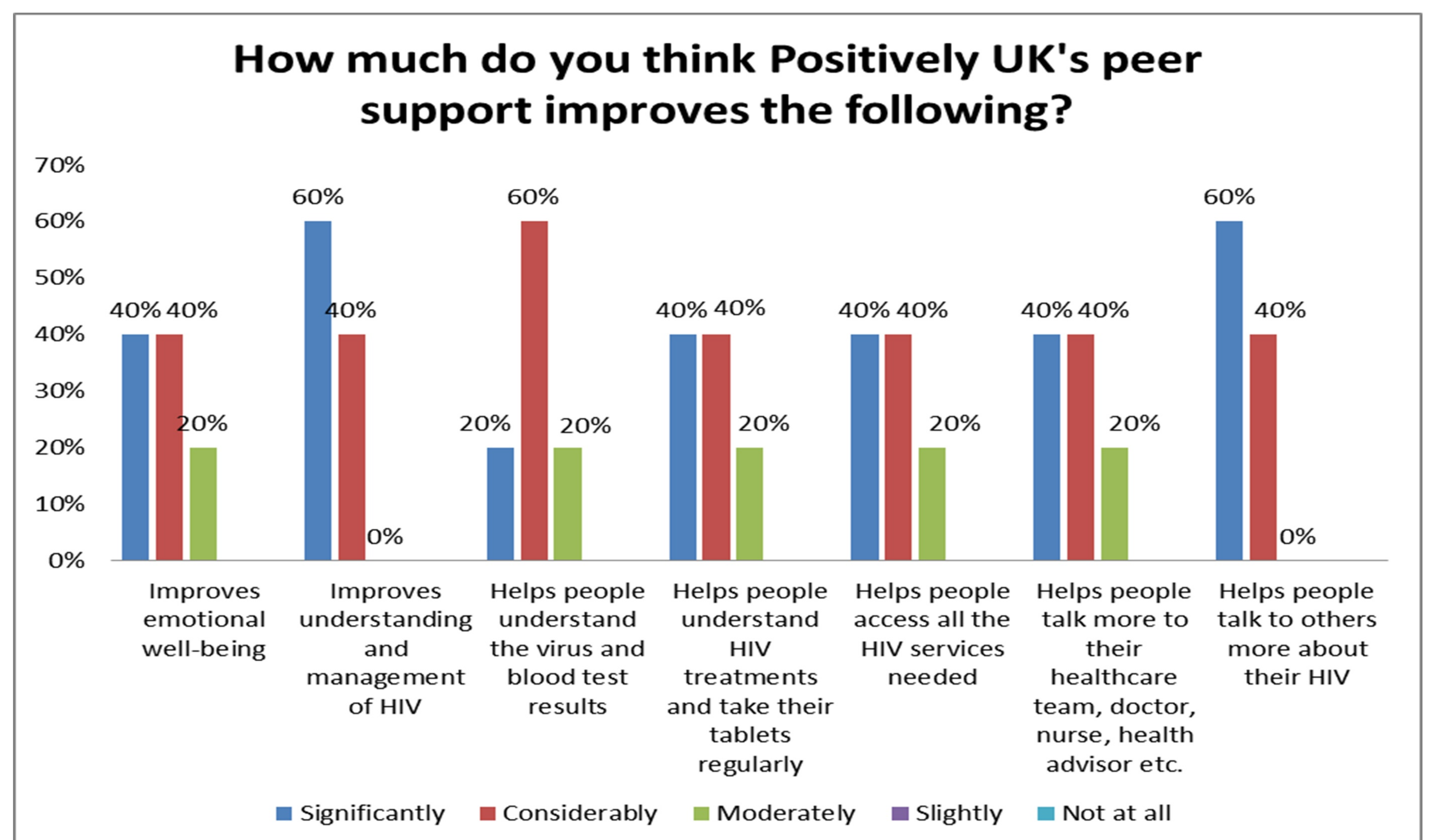
An on-line survey was emailed to HCPs that work in the 10 London clinics that currently offer Positively UK's peer support. In total 9 HCPs responded from 8 different clinics.

Results

On average 5.9 people living with HIV access Positively UK's peer support service, every week, per clinic that responded. 100% of the respondents (HCPs) said they believe Positively UK's peer support significantly (40%) or very significantly (60%) improves wellbeing.

This result correlates with the service user results that showed a statistically significant improvement in well-being ($p \leq 0.01$) using the validated Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

100% said that peer support complements clinical care (60%-extremely complementary, 20%-very complementary and 20%-quite complementary) 60% said that peer support significantly and 40% considerably improves understanding and management of HIV (graph 1).



100% that peer support improves well-being (60% very significantly and 40% significantly)
 "People have to be self-caring to have a healthy long term prognosis when living with HIV".

Conclusions and Recommendations

Positively UK's peer support significantly improves well-being in people living with HIV. It also complements clinical care helping people understand and manage their HIV.

Integrating peer support within other clinics could improve outcomes for patients in those centres.

Further research needs to be carried out to understand potential benefits to clinical outcomes, and this is now being undertaken through a pilot project with Homerton University Hospital.

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