

Positive self-image related to an HIV diagnosis

The Young People Living with HIV Stigma Survey UK 2017

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Background

- The Young People Living with HIV Stigma Survey UK were co-produced by young people living with HIV (YPLWH), clinicians and researchers. It is a collaborative, community-led initiative that capture the feelings and experiences of living with HIV within the past 12 months.
- Young people (YP) aged 15-24 were recruited through HIV clinics and community organisations to complete an anonymous online survey.
- Participants answered 9 questions on positive (4) and negative (5) feelings in relation to HIV-status in the past 12 months.
- A composite binary positive self-image score out of 9 was created by summing responses :
 - 1 point for each "yes" response to a "positive" question
 - 1 point for each "no" response to a "negative" question
- A cutoff of 6/9 was chosen to indicate high positive self-image
- We report differences of positive self-image among different groups of YPLWH in the UK.

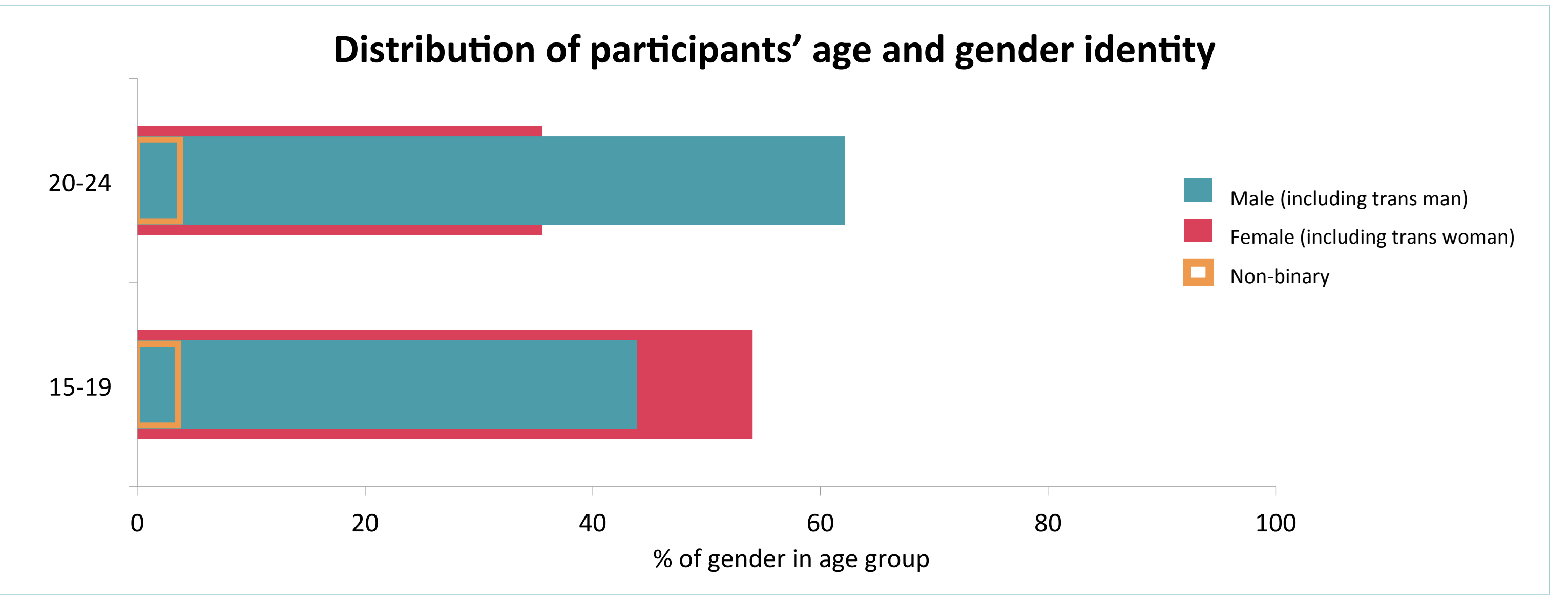
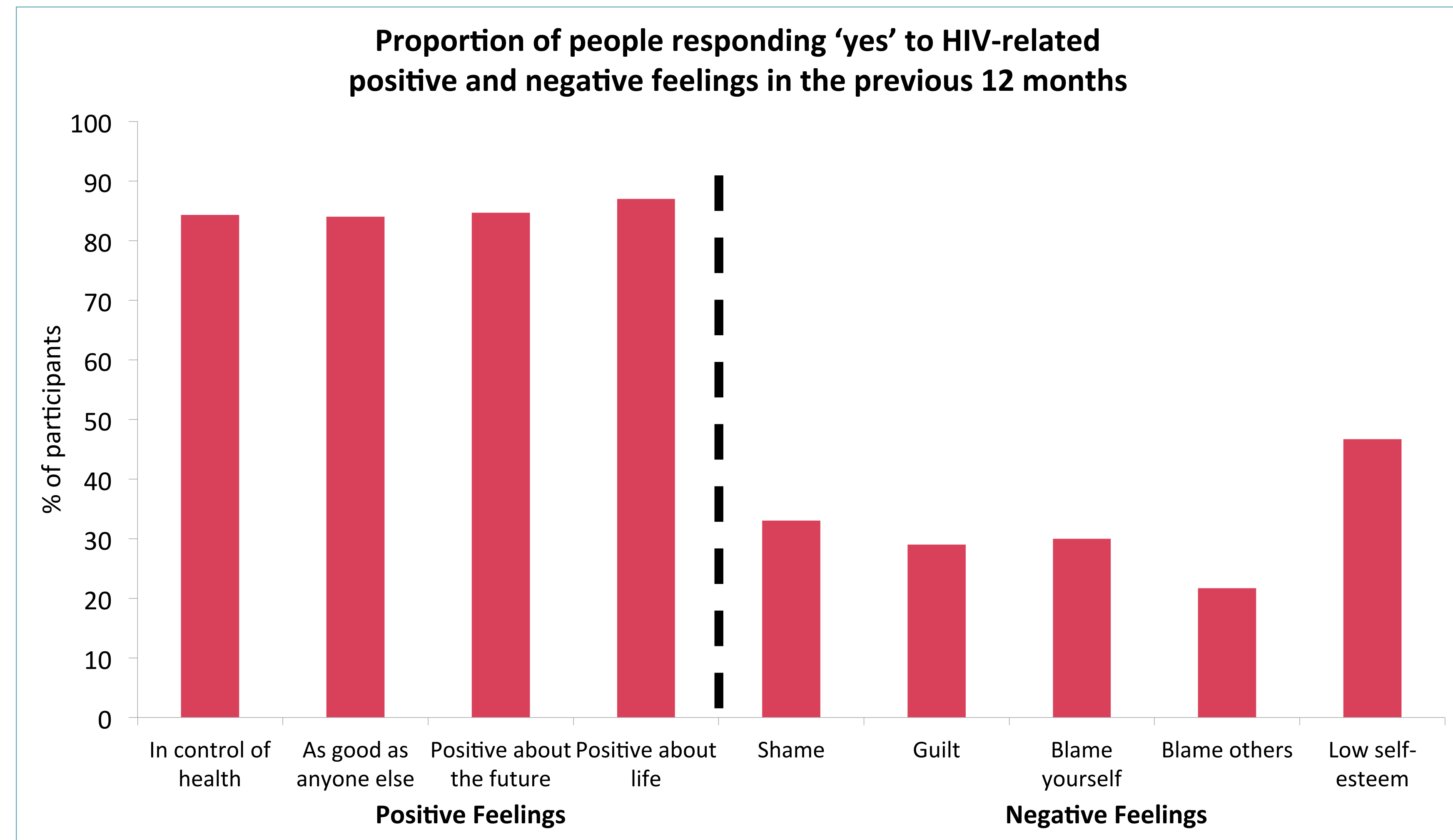


"It is not something I concern myself with so much that I wake up in the morning and tell myself 'I live with this. I almost forget I have it until I have an appointment approaching.'"

"Knowing my condition from a young age helped me become very organised with regards to my medicines. I'm doing so with a much better understanding of how to handle myself so that I can enjoy a long and fulfilling life just like anyone else."

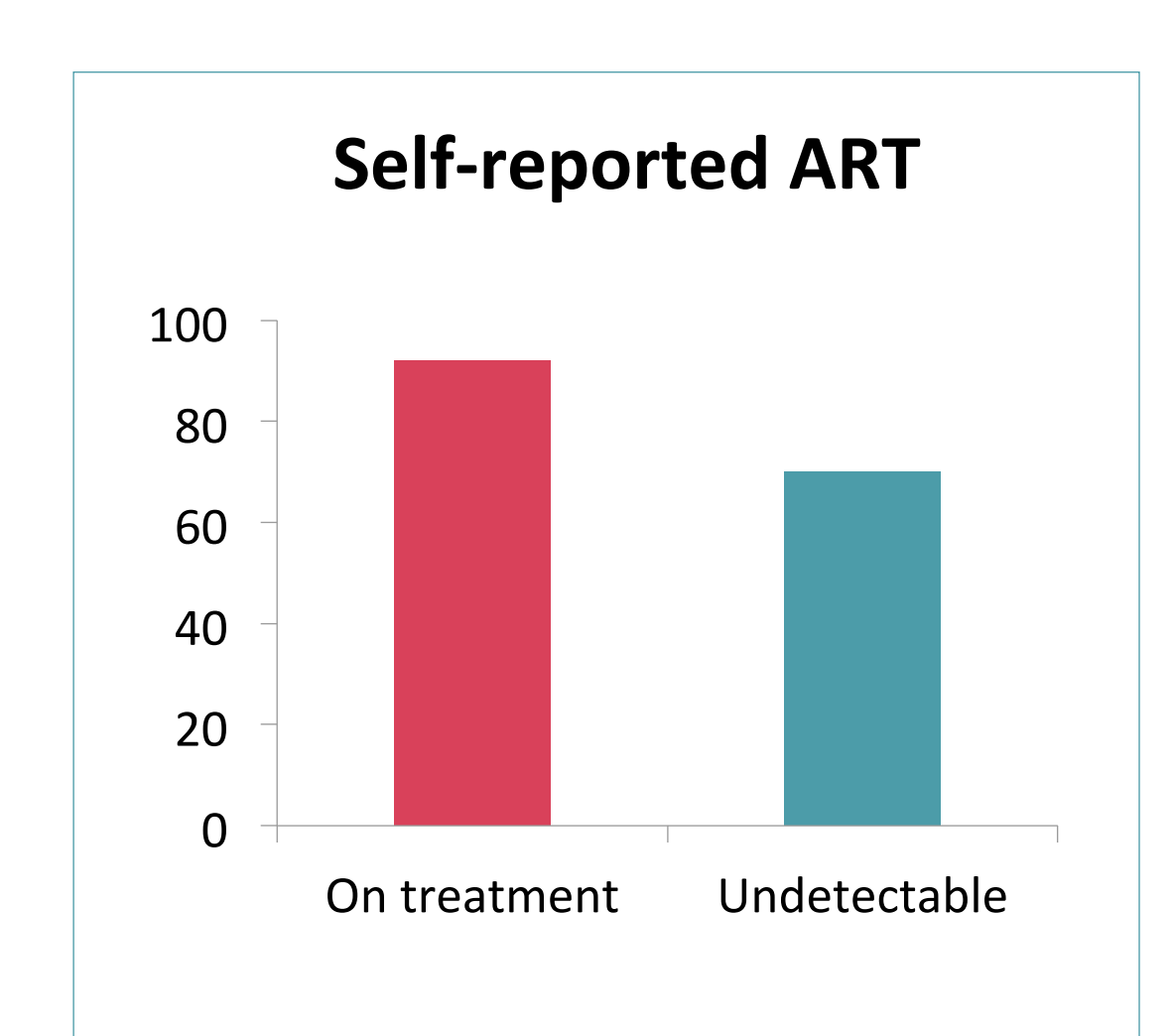
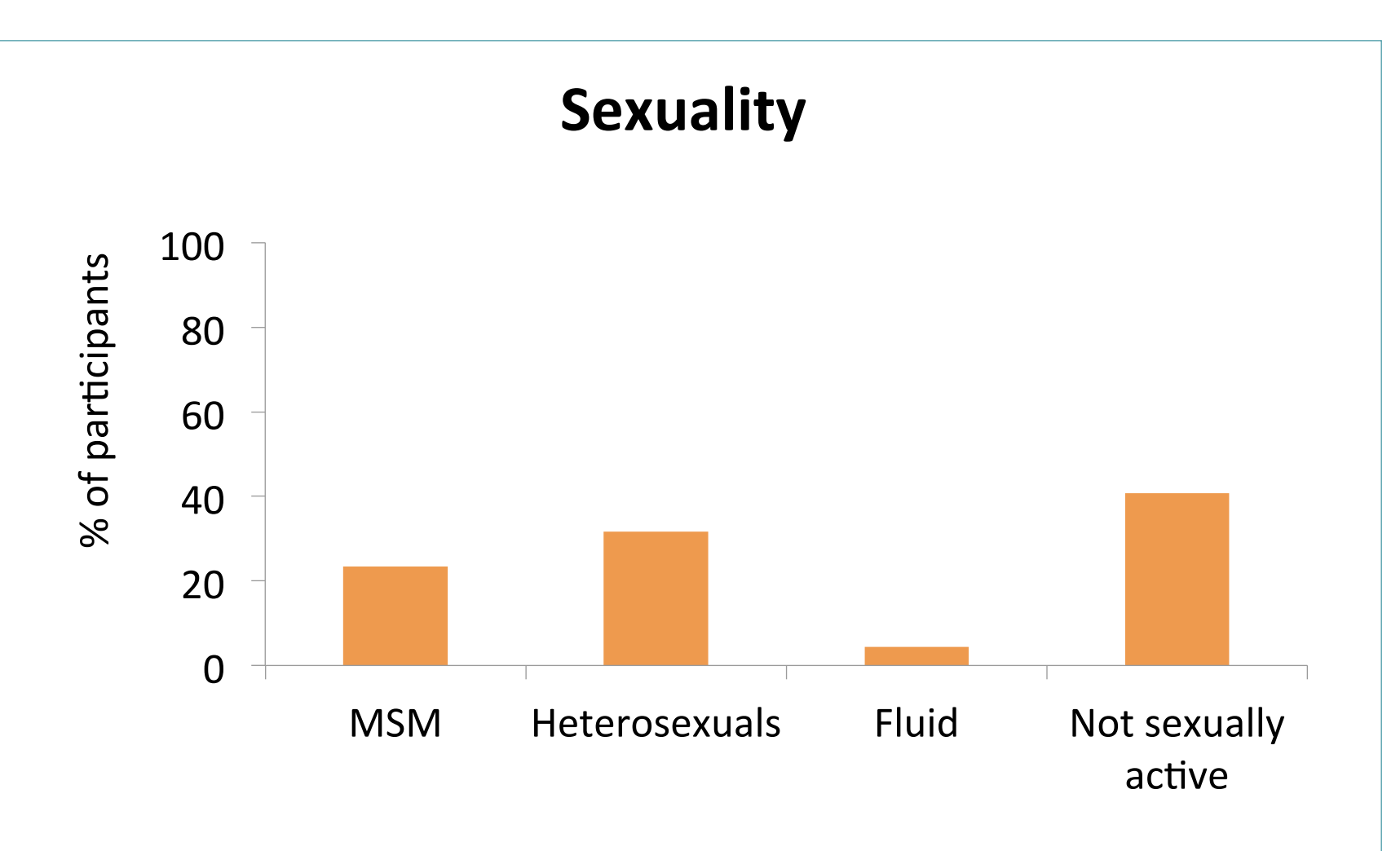
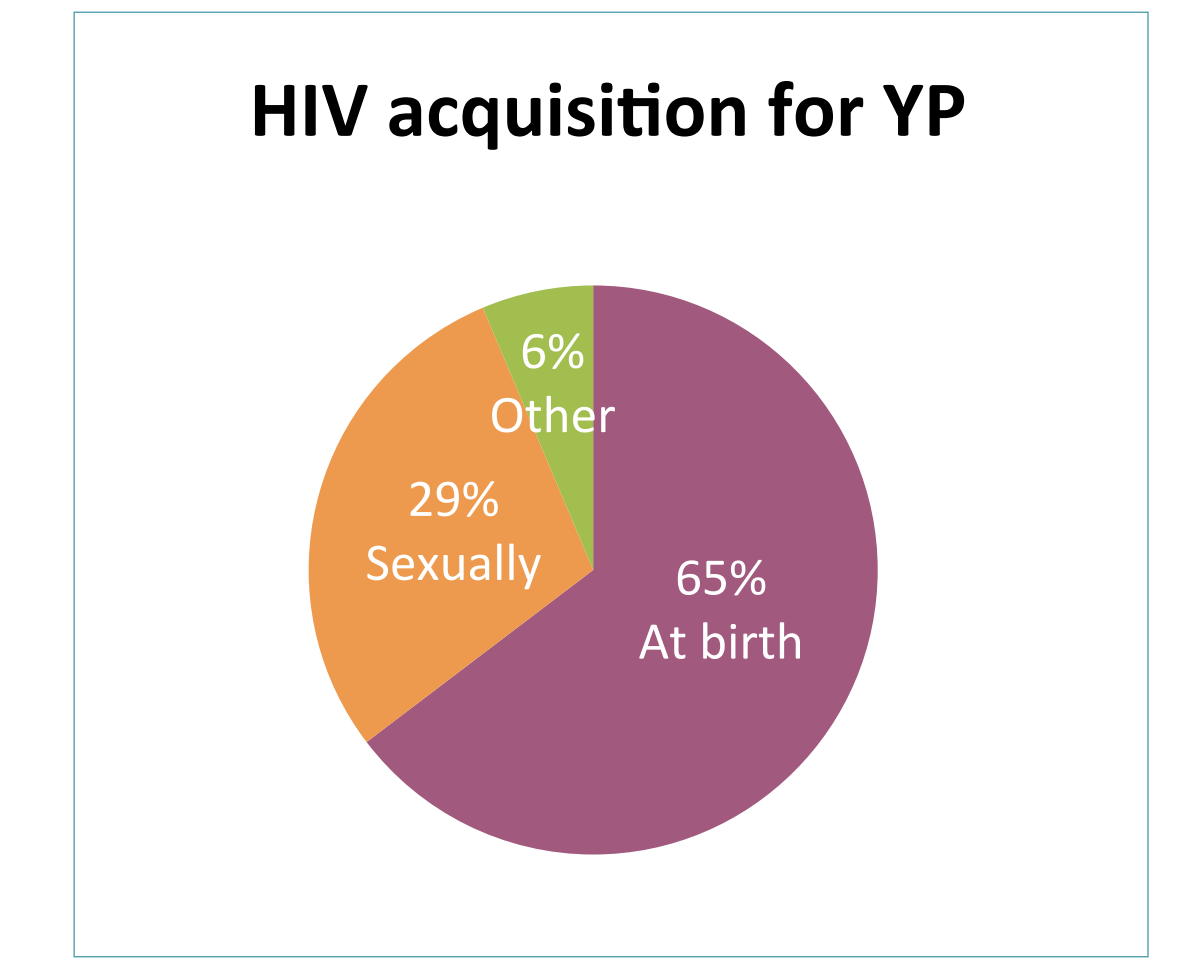
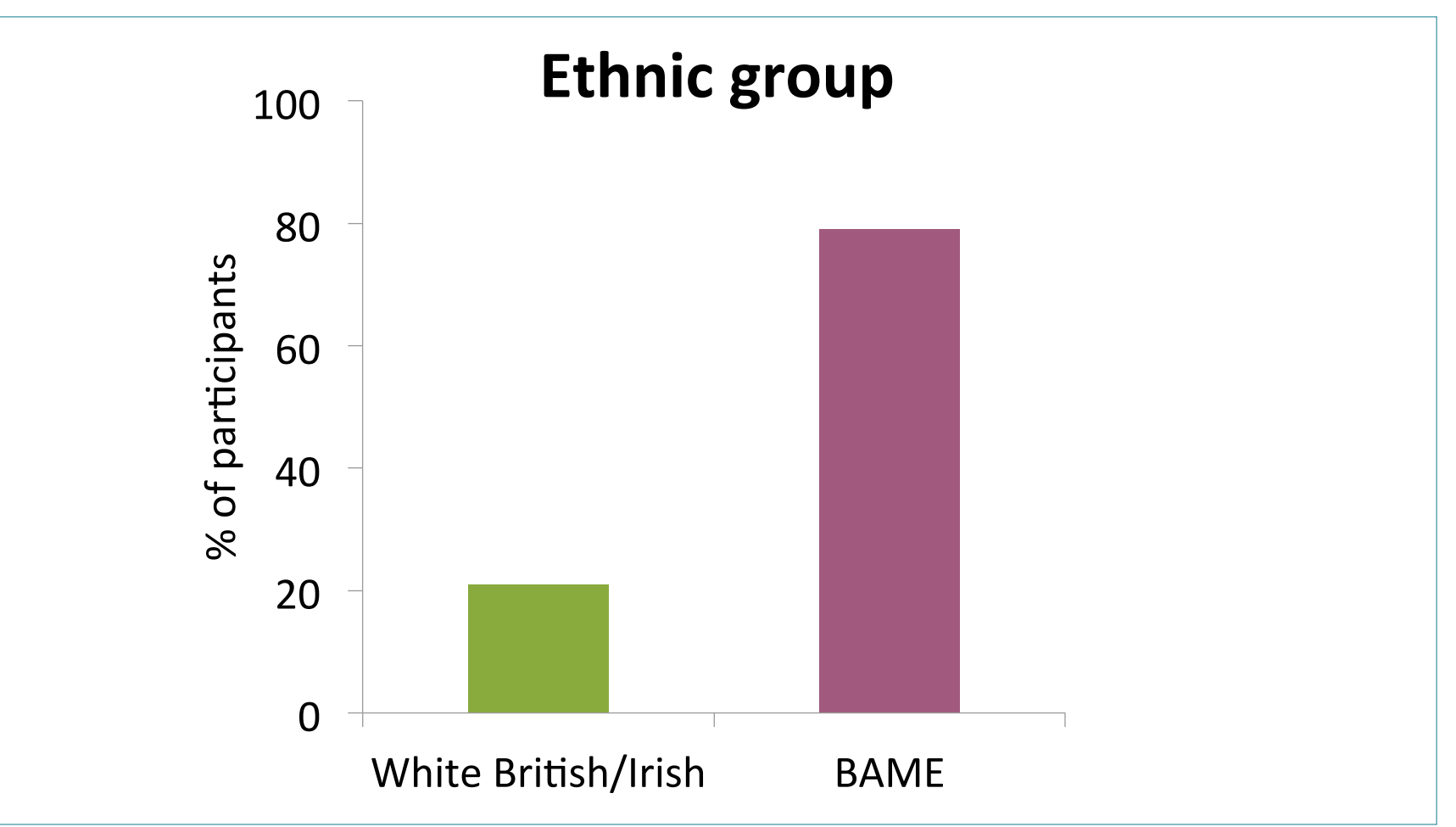
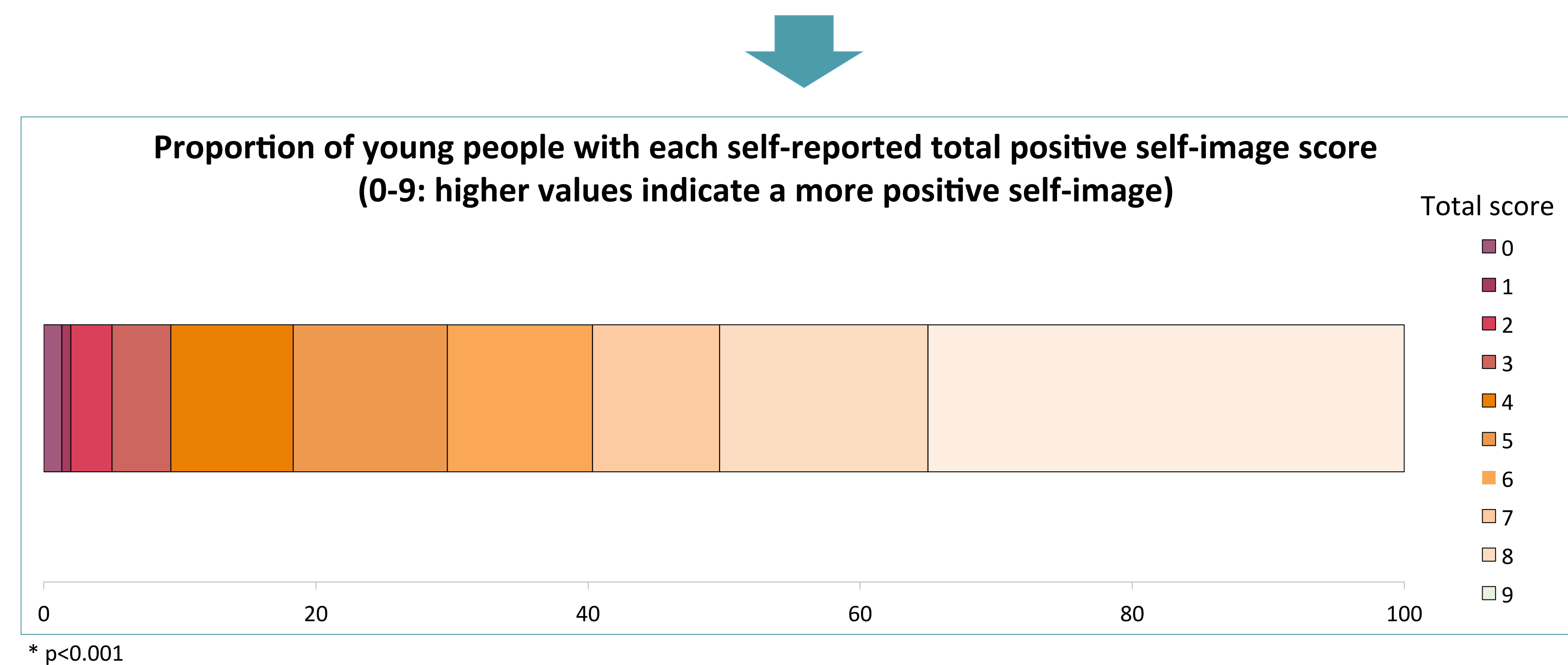
"I just get on with my life and rarely think about the HIV just the stresses of life."

"I am an upbeat person, I always think it could be worse and I am luckily to be mostly healthy."



Results

- 300 young people took part in the study with median age of 20 years (17,22).
- Young people report high levels of positive feelings (>80%) and low levels of negative feelings with regard to their HIV status in the last 12 months (Figure).
- Quotes from YPLWH are presented above.
- Participants who are currently on treatment with self-reported undetectable viral load (VL) are more likely to report a high positive self-image (score $\geq 6/9$) compared to those who are not (Table).
- Participants aged 20-24 were slightly less likely to have a high composite self-image score to 15-19 year olds (OR 0.8, 95%CI 0.49-1.34). No significant differences were found in positive self-image by gender, ethnicity, sexuality or mode of HIV acquisition.
- In multivariable models after adjustment, young people who are on treatment remained more likely to report positive feelings and have a better outlook about their HIV compared to those who weren't (Table).



Association between suppressive ART and self-image: Results from logistic regression analyses

	Currently not on ART or on ART with detectable VL (N=95)	Currently on ART with undetectable VL (N=205)	Unadjusted OR (95% CI) ART vs. no ART	Adjusted OR (95% CI)* ART vs. no ART
In control of health	66 (69.5%)	187 (91.2%)	4.56 (2.37-8.76)	4.44 (2.17-9.07)
As good as anyone else	70 (73.7%)	182 (88.8%)	2.82 (1.5-5.3)	2.55 (1.3-5.0)
Blame yourself	37 (39.0%)	53 (25.9%)	0.55 (0.33-0.92)	0.49 (0.27-0.87)
Blame others	31 (32.6%)	34 (16.6%)	0.41 (0.23-0.72)	0.33 (0.18-0.64)
Positive self-image	46 (48.4%)	133 (64.9%)	2.34 (1.39-3.95)	2.42 (1.36-4.34)

* Adjusted for demographic characteristics, mode of HIV acquisition, and a high PHQ2 score

Conclusions & Recommendations

- The majority of young people living with HIV express a positive self image and are well adjusted to their status.
- A more positive self image is associated with being on suppressive therapy for young people living with HIV in the UK.
- Strategies that translate youth positive self-image into improved health behaviours and reduced risk-taking require further exploration.

Acknowledgements

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