

# Still talking *about us*, still not *listening to us*: Women and trans people living with HIV at AIDS2020

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## Background

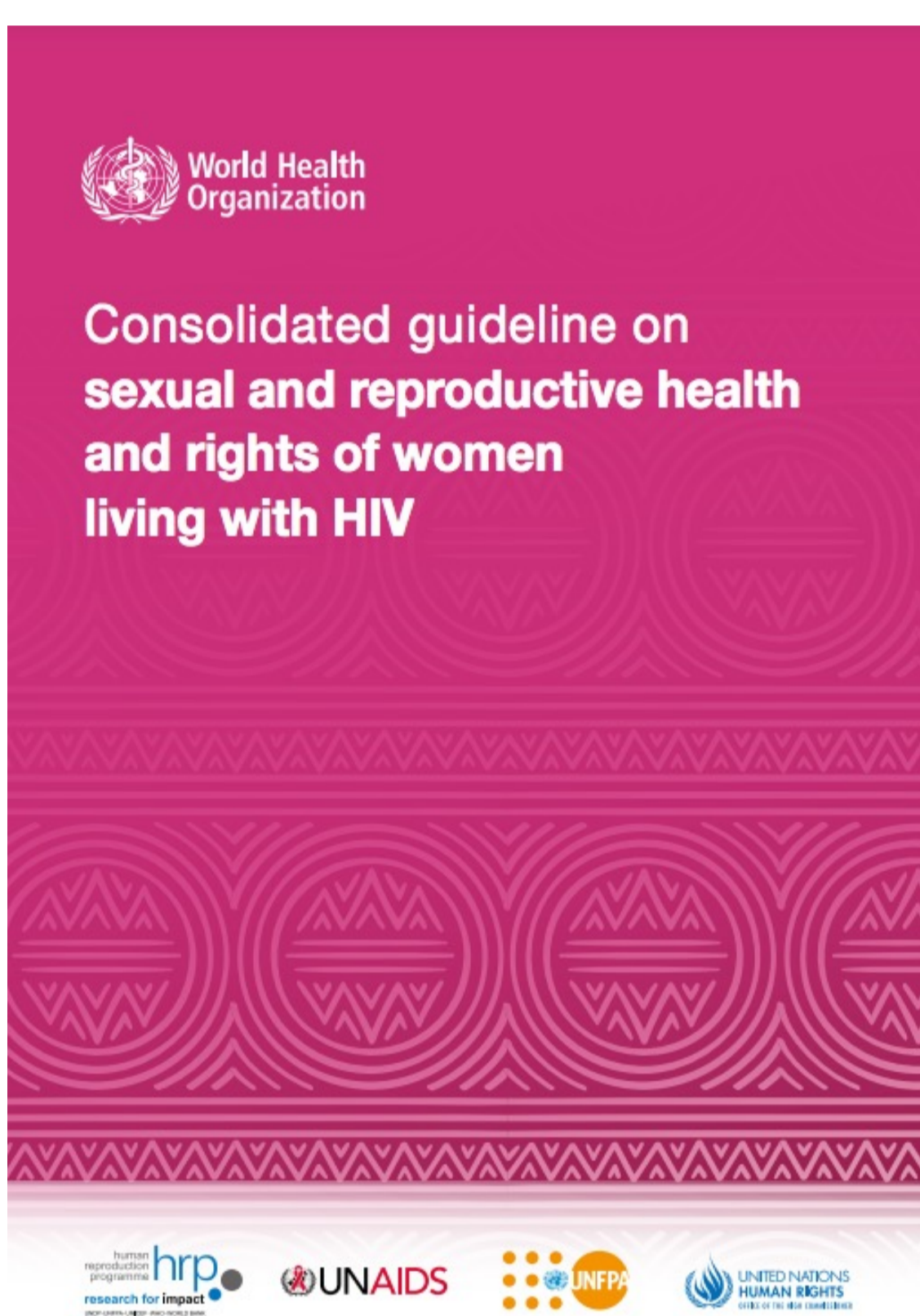
WHO's 2017 [Consolidated Guideline on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights \(SRHR\) of women living with HIV](#) states we should be equal partners in research (p. 91, extract below).

### 6.2 Towards an appropriate approach to research on SRHR

#### 6.2.1 Women living with HIV as equal partners in research

Research about women living with HIV should be conducted with, by and for women living with HIV, as equal research partners. Research that is pursued and funded in this area should include justification for why it is important to women living with HIV.

Work is needed to ensure that human rights are actively and effectively integrated into health service planning and the provision of health care. Similarly, SRHR researchers should aim to incorporate human rights considerations and associated outcome measurements into their study designs and should ensure that the language they use is appropriate to the SRHR context.



## Methods

- ✓ [AIDS2020 Abstract Book](#) manual search for abstracts co/authored by organisations of people living with HIV and/or key populations.
- ✓ Abstracts identified as community co/authored were read for relevance to women (including trans women) living with HIV.
- ✓ Keyword search of the abstract books for [2020](#), [2018](#) and [2016](#).



*"There is no better way of controlling people than providing them your own version of who they are."*

Chinua Achebe

## Conclusions

- ❖ At AIDS2020 women and trans people living with HIV were rarely co/authors of oral abstracts.
- ❖ SRHR and GIPA - key issues of concern to women and trans people living with HIV - are increasingly absent from conference abstracts
- Future conferences **must not talk about us but hear from us**, not as subjects/objects of research but **as researchers, co/authors and presenters**, in order to adhere to WHO Guidelines.
- Co-production, community co-authorship or community-led research should be recognised in conference abstract selection criteria, to enrich the **quality** of all research – and policies.

Key word	2016	2018	2020
Women	3009	3378	2519
Gender	667	731	716
Transgender	409	603	556
Human rights	277	303	215
SRHR	78	117	38
GIPA	9	7	5

## Results

### Oral abstracts:

55% of presenting authors at AIDS2020 were women, and 0.05% were transgender women (figures provided to the authors by the IAS). However, analysis of the oral abstracts shows declines in opportunities for women living with HIV to present in oral abstracts:

- The manual search of AIDS2020 abstracts identified only **1 oral abstract as being co/authored by organisations of people living with HIV and specifically focused on women living with HIV**. This was down from 2 oral abstracts at AIDS2018, one of which focused on trans women living with HIV.
- At AIDS2020, **13/202 (6%) oral abstracts were co/authored by organisations of people living with HIV or key populations, and of (potential) relevance to women living with HIV in all our diversities** (ie not specifically focused on women living with HIV, but indicate some inclusion of or possible relevance to women living with HIV). This compared to 8% of oral abstracts at AIDS2018.

### Key word search:

The search of abstract books shows mentions of women has fallen between 2016 and 2020. There were strikingly few mentions of SRHR and GIPA, particularly in 2020.

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Comparisons to AIDS2018 refer to our analysis:

Tholanah, M., Chung, C., Welbourn, A., Bell, E. and Hale, F. (2020) [Less talking about us, more hearing from us: Why so few women and trans people living with HIV as speakers, oral abstract co/authors, and abstract presenters at AIDS2018?](#) AIDS2020 E-Poster, Track F, PEF1894.

Two of the authors have also written about the challenges of submitting an abstract:

Tholanah, M. and Hale, F. (2022) [AIDS2022 abstracts are due Feb 4 2022! We reflect on our challenges in submitting an abstract and getting access to AIDS2020, and hope AIDS2022 can get it right.](#)

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To read more about the SRHR of women living with HIV and the issues we face when policies do not include us, scan the code:

