

**PSYCHOLOGY, HEALTH & MEDICINE**  
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**Abstract**

**TITLE:** STORIES OF MOTHERING WHILE HIV POSITIVE

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**AIMS:** To explore the experiences of HIV positive mothers living in Ireland. This narrative study specifically set out to consider how being HIV positive affects mothers taking in account the social impact of HIV.

**METHODS:** The focus of this study is to gain an understanding of the lives of the participants, using a narrative approach. The overarching epistemology relates to mothering in the context of HIV disease. The collected narratives allow the women's experiences to be documented. Through telling their stories people define both themselves and their experience (Murray, 2009). I used an experience centred narrative approach. A purposive sample of eleven HIV positive mothers took part. They were interviewed in a HIV peer support centre in Dublin.

**RESULTS:** This study revealed the centrality of being a mother to women who are HIV positive. Other key findings were ongoing protection of their children from HIV long after pregnancy. Most minimised HIV in their lives so did want to be defined by it. Mothers were concerned about disclosure in particular telling their children. Most reported that meeting others who were HIV positive was beneficial.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Despite the challenges HIV brought to their lives their identity as mothers was integral to them. The accounts in this study are insightful about the experiences of HIV positive mothers.

**References:** Murray M 2009 Telling stories and making sense of cancer. IJNP, Vol 1.