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# Metro Inclusive Health











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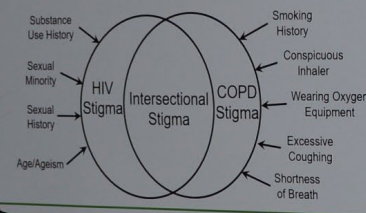
# An Exploration of Intersectional Stigma of Older People Living with HIV and COPD in Alabama: A Qualitative Study of Three Cases

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## Background and Significance

- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the most common non-communicable respiratory disease that people living with HIV (PLWH) experience as their life expectancy increases.
- Having HIV and COPD cause disease-related stigma, leading to worse self-care behavior and quality of life.
- Despite other types of intersectional stigma showing synergistic effects, there is a lack of studies exploring the intersectional stigma of having two diseases in older PLWH and comorbid COPD.

**Figure 1**  
Conceptual Overlap of HIV and COPD Stigmas



## Findings

- Participants were an average of 60 years old, all African American, and two females and one male. Five major themes emerged describing the intersectional stigma experienced by older PLWH with COPD.

<b>Stigma of HIV and stigma of COPD</b>	"Because people will look at you as if, like when you have oxygen tank, that you are terminally ill, very, very sick...So some COPD sufferers, they may tend to cough a lot, and people, it creates a stigma where people do not want to be around you." (Participant C)
<b>Stigma of HIV outweighs that of COPD</b>	"They are both diseases, but having HIV is in a way totally different from having COPD because they really—it really has a stigma." (Participant C)
<b>Being thrown for a loop</b>	"It's like one situation, then here come another situation then they're back to back. Yeah, it's like you're just being thrown for a loop basically. Yeah, you go from bad to badder." (Participant A)
<b>Different people cope different ways</b>	"I go for like a class once a week, just to keep in—in case something going on with me or whatever and I need to talk to 'em, but yeah, stay connected." (Participant A) "I go on with my life as if it's not there." (Participant A)
<b>When you are uneducated, you don't understand</b>	"I don't have the time. I don't have the patience" to "teach them and make them understand and be mindful what it means." (Participant A)

## Conclusion

- Participants did not describe the synergistic effect of having HIV and comorbid COPD. They illustrated a more substantial stigma of HIV, which overshadows the stigma of COPD. This finding is different from previous studies regarding other types of intersectional stigma (e.g., the intersectional stigma of sexual orientation and HIV), which showed potential synergistic effects.

## Implications

- Understanding the stigma of older PLWH and COPD may inform healthcare providers on how to navigate disease-related stigmas.

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Student Poster Winner













Saturday



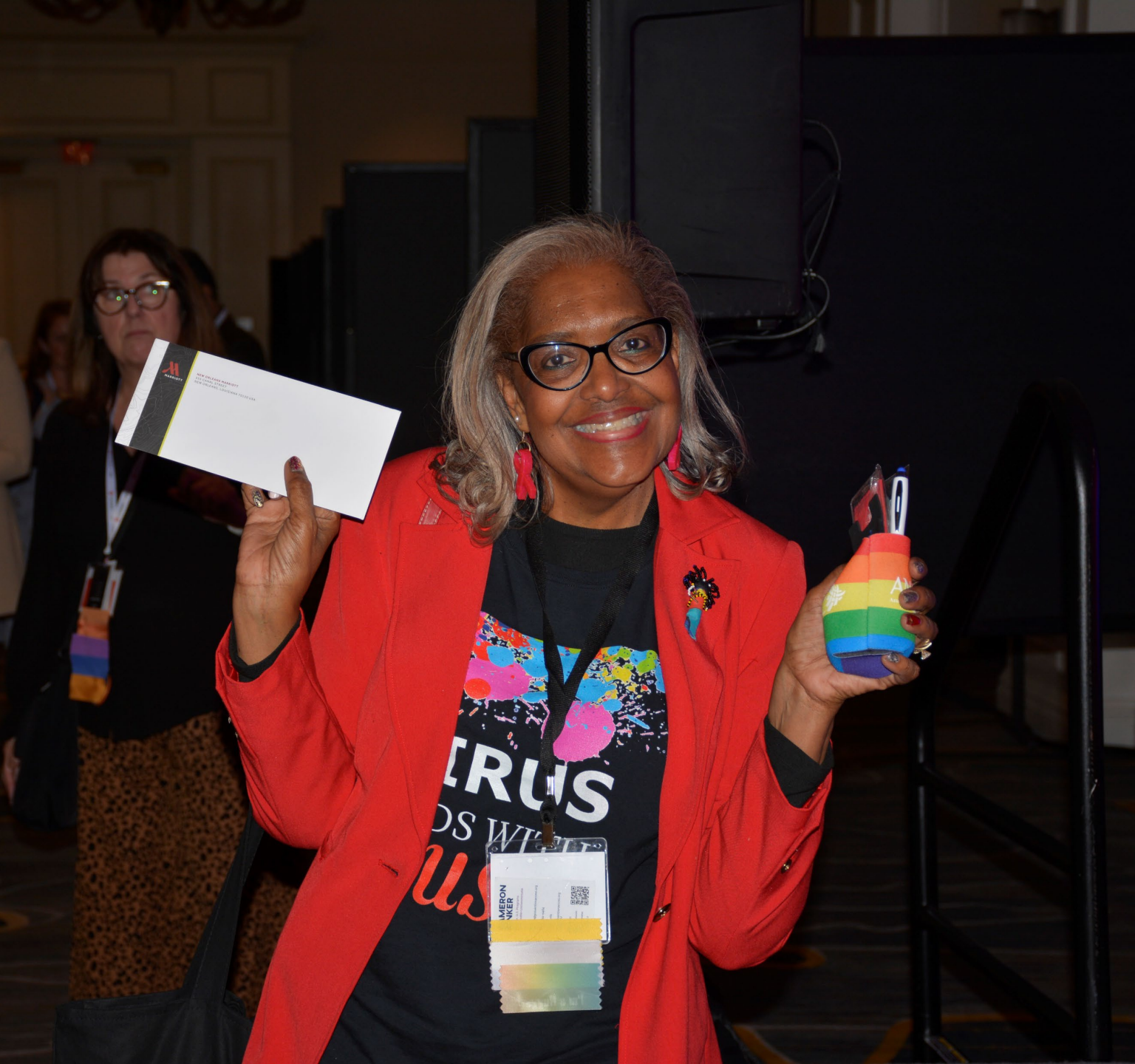




























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