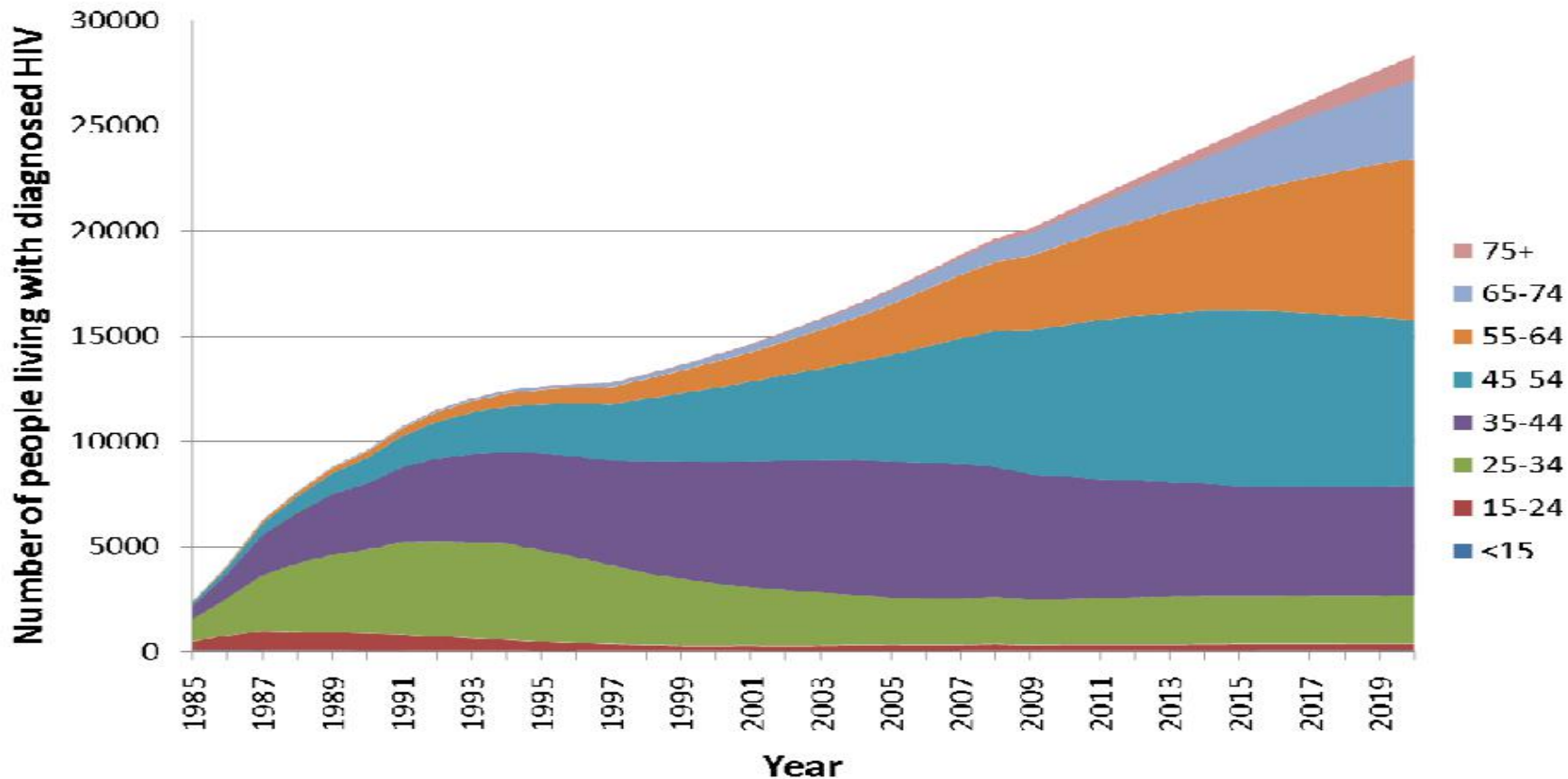


# HIV stigma and discrimination: a perspective on elder abuse

David Pieper, HIV and Ageing Project Officer

- “How do I know that I’m going to be treated compassionately and with understanding? Will my story as an old ‘poofter’ be treated respectfully? What will it be like in aged care with HIV – it’s still very stigmatised”

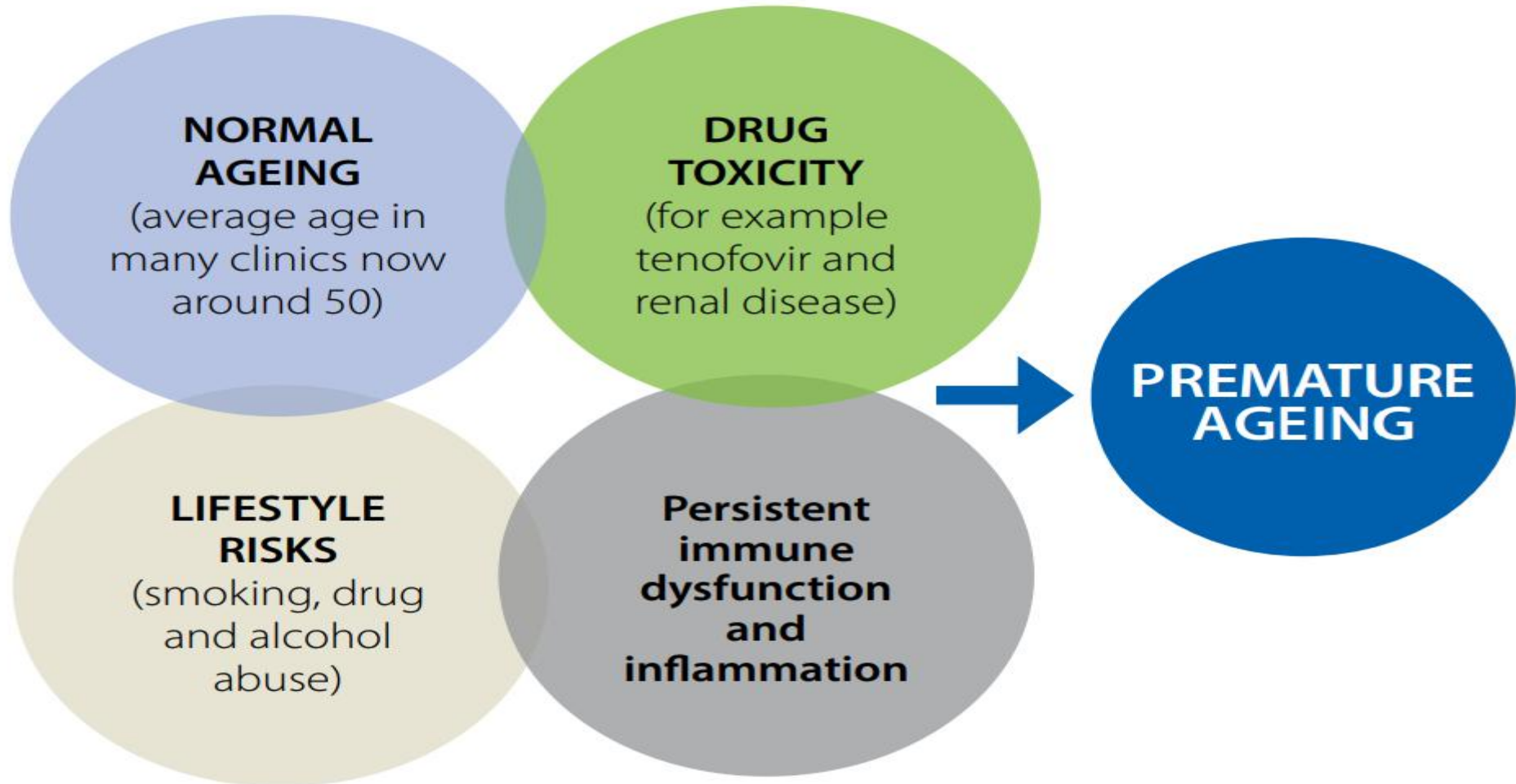
Figure 11 Numbers of people living with diagnosed HIV by age group and year



# Australians with HIV are Ageing

- 27,000 Australians living with HIV
- Average age of PLHIV is >45
- 50% of PLHIV over 50yo by 2020
- Facing the reality of growing old
- Fears of living in poverty
- Early development of ageing diseases
- Requiring aged care earlier

**Figure 2: Causes of Premature Ageing**



# HIV Stigma and discrimination

- Fears, prejudices or negative attitudes
- Stereotypes about people with HIV
- Aged care workers are not exempt
- People born overseas
- Failure to recognize their own discrimination
- Self stigma of people with HIV
- Lack of knowledge or experience
- Irrational fear of infection

# Risk of HIV transmission

- Casual physical contact – zero
- Contact with vomit, faeces & urine – zero
- Coughing or sneezing – zero
- Bloody saliva and bites that break skin – zero
- Blood contact with broken skin – low
- Blood in eyes or mouth – low
- Needlestick injury - moderate

# Attitudes of HIV care staff

- Concern contracting HIV from a drinking cup
- Unease about visits by pregnant staff
- Computer “alerts” to prevent infection
- Use of “special measures” for HIV+ clients
- Use of gloves during history taking
- Duty to disclose to another nurse
- Disclosure to a council worker



# Examples of elder abuse towards people with HIV

- Not making eye contact
- Speaking sharply or abruptly
- Using different infection control precautions
- Physical abuse
- Refusing care or providing substandard care, e.g. not spending enough time on their needs
- Avoiding touching or only touching when wearing gloves
- Assumptions about sexuality, drug use or unsafe sex
- Disclosing the person's HIV status without their consent

# Upskilling aged care workers to care for people ageing with HIV



# Fears of People with HIV over 45

- Ending up in mainstream nursing home
- May not receive adequate treatment
- Stigma and discrimination
- Living with complex comorbidities
- Lack of clarity about HIV and the ageing process
- Loss of independence
- Isolation and loneliness
- Limited financial resources

# NAPWHA responds

1. Navigating health and social care services
2. Medical services to address HIV & ageing
3. Increased surveillance of PLHIV > 50 years
4. Prevention & lifestyle advice for PLHIV > 50
5. Consumer empowerment for PLHIV

**Questions?**

