

## POSTER

### Health and Self-Esteem

P. WEITZMAN, S. LEVKOFF. *An evaluation of web-based safe sex education for older divorced women. Gerontechnology 2018;17(Suppl):179s; <https://doi.org/10.4017/gt.2018.17.s.174.00>* **Purpose** HIV is on the rise among older Americans, particularly women<sup>1</sup>. The increase coincides with the rise in gray divorce<sup>2</sup>. The majority of older divorced women in the US are African American or Latino<sup>2</sup>, groups already at increased risk for HIV/AIDS<sup>1</sup>. Most at-risk older women do not seek out HIV information either because they are unaware of their risk status, or because of stigma associated with discussion of sexual practices<sup>3</sup>. Because older women would be unlikely to access a website focusing on “safe sex,” we developed a website targeting women, 50 and older (*Figure 1*), who have experienced divorced, as “divorce” is a frequently used internet search term<sup>4</sup>, and gray divorce is on the rise. The multi-media (text/video) website, called [divorceafter50.com](http://divorceafter50.com), included positive psychology-grounded information on gray divorce, dating, and HIV/STD prevention. **Method** We conducted a (i) pre-post evaluation with 37 divorced/separated women over 50 to examine the preliminary effectiveness of the [divorceafter50.com](http://divorceafter50.com) website on perceived HIV risk and self-efficacy for safe sex (Phase I) and (ii) a randomized controlled trial of the website with 218 divorced/separated women 50 and older examining the same outcomes (Phase II). This session presents the final results of the Phase I evaluation and preliminary qualitative results from the Phase II evaluation of the [divorceafter50.com](http://divorceafter50.com) website. **Results & Discussion** Pre-post evaluation of the Phase 1 website showed perceived HIV risk scores significantly improved,  $t=-1.76$ ,  $p=.05$  among women who viewed the site. Safe sex self-efficacy scores were also marginally significant  $t=-1.57$ ,  $p=.07$ . The expanded Phase II site included additional videos from experts on a range of topics, including spiritual compatibility, positive psychology, online dating, older women’s health, and HIV prevention. An “ask the expert” section and online community were also added. Quantitative data analysis is underway. Content and thematic analyses of online community discussions have been completed. Most active discussion topics included: emotional trauma of divorce, financial stress, and fears related to new sexual relationships. Safe sex was endorsed in discussions about sexual relationships. Thematic analyses revealed themes of hope and gratitude as helpful in dealing with these challenges, suggesting a positive-psychology framework for promoting well-being and safe sex practices among older divorced women may be effective. Commercialization possibilities include partnerships with women’s organizations, AARP and/or condom manufacturers.

#### References

1. Centers for Disease Control. CDC Fact Sheet, Estimates of New HIV infections in the United States, 2006-2009 [Internet]. 2011. Available from: [www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/HIV-Infections-2006-2009.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/docs/HIV-Infections-2006-2009.pdf).
2. Brown S, Lin IF. The gray divorce revolution: Rising divorce among middle-aged and older adults 1990-2009. Bowling Green State University Working Papers Series WP-12-04. 2012
3. International Association of Providers of AIDS Care. Older people and HIV [Internet]. 2016. Available from: [http://www.aidsinfonet.org/fact\\_sheets/view/616#WHY\\_ARE\\_OLDER\\_PEOPLE\\_GETTING\\_INFECTED](http://www.aidsinfonet.org/fact_sheets/view/616#WHY_ARE_OLDER_PEOPLE_GETTING_INFECTED)
4. Google. 110,000 monthly “divorce” internet searches in the US; 5,000,000+ monthly search for phrases that include “divorce” [Internet]. 2017. Available from: <https://www.wordtracker.com/search?query=divorce>

*Keywords:* safe sex, older divorced women, smart web intervention  
*Address:* Environment and Health Group Inc, Cambridge, MA, USA;  
*E:* [Pat.weitzman@gmail.com](mailto:Pat.weitzman@gmail.com)

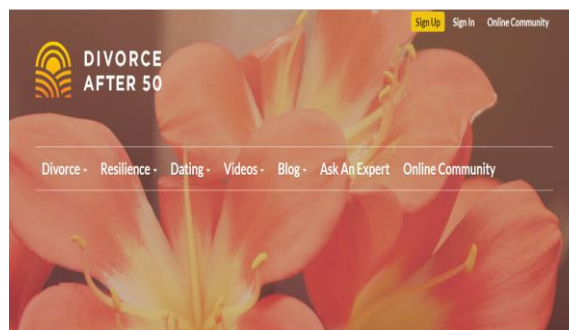


Figure 1. [www.divorceafter50.com](http://www.divorceafter50.com)