



# IMPROVING ADHERENCE TO ANTIRETROVIRAL TREATMENT IN PERUVIAN AMAZON: A STUDY OF GROWTH GROUP PROGRAMS IN 2022

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## BACKGROUND

Retention and adherence to HIV treatment are important to achieve the 95-95-95 goals. AHF Peru, with the objective of improving retention and adherence to antiretroviral (ARV) treatment, developed two programs focused on people who are starting their treatment and those who have abandoned it.

**TOOLS THAT STRENGTHEN RETENTION**

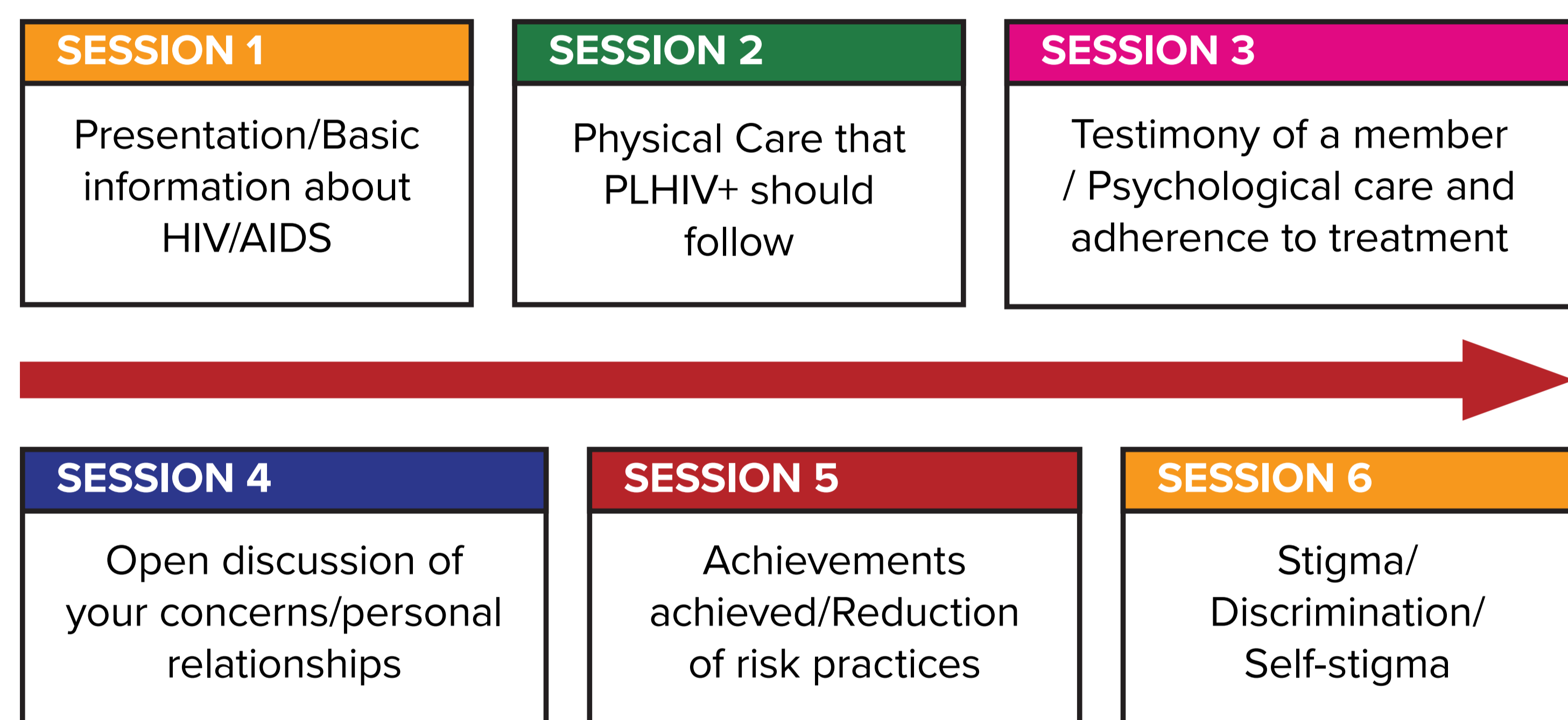
Myth - Free Information + Community formation & the feeling of accompaniment = **GROWTH GROUPS**

**MAIN GOAL**  
Provide basic information that allows participants to reduce anxiety and distress to make better decisions about their health.

## METHODS

During 2022, growth groups (GG) were launched in Lima and Iquitos (Peruvian Amazon) for those starting their treatment (SGG) and for those who had abandoned their treatments (AGG).

### AGG SESSIONS



**AGG FEATURES**

<b>Time:</b>	3:00pm
<b>Frequency:</b>	2 times a week (Tuesday & Friday)
<b>Maximum number of participants:</b>	9
<b>Modality:</b>	face-to-face
<b>Moderators:</b>	psychologist, infectious disease specialist and retention assistant.

- CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPANTS**
- AGG:**
- Clients who are considered recovered dropout.
  - Clients who do not attend their appointments on a recurring basis.
- SGG:**
- Client one month after starting ART.

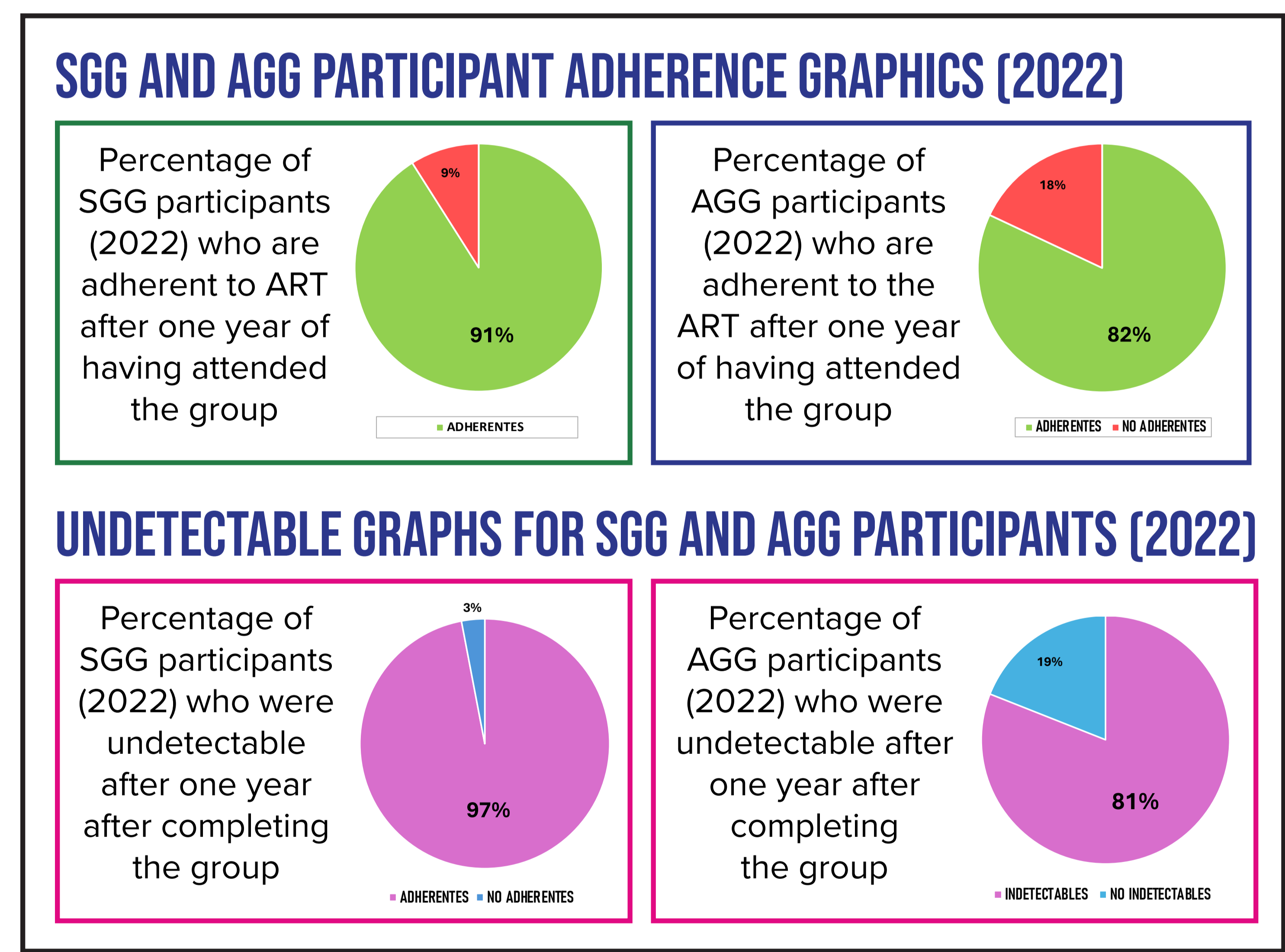
The SGG holds a meeting a month after starting treatment while the AGG holds six meetings. In these meetings, HIV, ARV treatment, physical and psychological care, problem-solving tools, reduction of risk practices, stigma and discrimination are discussed.

## RESULTS

In 2022, 14 groups were formed with a total of 88 participants (SGG=43; AGG=45). 91% SGG and 82% AGG of clients adhered to treatment within one year. Of the adherent clients whose viral load could be measured (SGG= 36; AGG=31), 97% of the SGG and 81% of the AGG had an undetectable viral load.



Of the seven clients (SGG= 4; AGG= 3) who abandoned treatment, five of them were drug users and suffered from mental disorders. One case reported gender violence, and in the remaining case, no information could be collected.



## CONCLUSIONS

Alternatives must be sought to ensure adherence to ARV treatments. We understand that these types of programs must be based on the social determinants of each population. Our patients' work schedules and difficulties, such as transportation, prevented some patients from participating in these programs. The results analyzed stimulate us to continue advancing in this type of community-based programs.