

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Recognition and Management of HIV-Related Neuropsychiatric Findings and Associated Impairments

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2020

Approved by the Assembly, April 2020

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

A variety of neurocognitive and neuropsychiatric disorders may develop in persons living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) at almost any point during the infection, whether symptomatic systemically or not. Brain-mediated signs and symptoms can arise from direct HIV infection of the brain; opportunistic or other infections or cancers of the brain; a psychological response to HIV or its stigma or other stressors; side effects of treatments; or multimorbid conditions, including alcohol and other substance use, other psychiatric disorders or co-infections with hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection and other pathogens.

APA Position:

1. **Psychiatrists should be aware of the neuropsychiatric manifestations of HIV infection and the importance of providing persons living with HIV with or referring persons living with HIV for further assessment and treatment, when patient shows signs of neuropsychological impairment.**
2. **It is inappropriate to solely use HIV serostatus or a diagnosis of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) as an indicator of impaired personal, social or occupational functioning.**
3. **Basing decisions about functional capacity on HIV serostatus or neuropsychological testing alone, without observation and collateral information of performance in relevant personal, social, and occupational tasks, may lead to unwarranted restrictions on persons living with HIV.**
4. **Psychiatrist should be aware that many of the neuropsychiatric manifestations of HIV infection can be ameliorated and even reversed with antiretroviral treatment. Psychostimulants are often useful in enhancing attention in mild cognitive disorder.**
5. **Psychiatrists should be aware that persons living with HIV who have neuropsychological deficits are protected by legislation. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those related to HIV, stipulates how disabled individuals must be accommodated in the work place..**

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