

# HIV-Associated Disease in the Era of Combination Antiretroviral Treatment

Achim Schwenk, PD Dr med DTMH FRCP  
North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust - London  
a.schwenk@doctors.org.uk

## Aims

To enable the non-expert ID doctor and microbiologist to

- Recognise signs & symptoms of (undiagnosed) HIV disease
- Discuss best strategies to reduce late HIV diagnosis
- Recognise, and deal with obstacles to testing
- Manage HIV testing for symptomatic patients
- Start managing some of the presenting diseases

## Background

Combination antiretroviral treatment effectively prevents the development of AIDS or lesser manifestations of HIV disease. A large proportion of patients miss out on this benefit because their diagnosis is made late (i.e. after their CD4 cell count has fallen below 250/ $\mu$ L ( $0.25 * 10^9/L$ )). This is associated with excess morbidity and mortality.

We will review epidemiological data from industrialised and resource-poor settings about late diagnosis. Strategies to reduce late HIV diagnosis will be discussed:

- Should we test everybody accessing healthcare, patients with indicator diseases, and/or patients with identified epidemiological risk?
- Should testing be based on implicit consent with opt-out or explicit consent after counselling?

Several clinical cases will allow us to discuss how the ID/microbiology expert can help other clinicians to spot (more or less subtle) signs of HIV infection

- Skin and mucosal signs
- Laboratory indicators
- Constitutional symptoms
- Symptoms and signs of primary HIV disease (seroconversion)
- Frequent AIDS-defining illnesses in undiagnosed HIV patients (e.g. *Pneumocystis* pneumonia, tuberculosis, cerebral toxoplasmosis, visceral leishmaniasis)

## Recommended reading

Treatment guidelines of the European AIDS Clinical Society

<http://www.eacs.eu/guide/index.htm>

HIV.NET – free textbook about HIV

German version <http://www.hiv.net/hivnet2007.pdf>

English version <http://www.hivmedicine.com/hivmedicine2007.pdf>

B Gazzard, N Clumeck, A d'Arminio Monforte and JD Lundgren: Indicator disease-guided testing for HIV – the next step for Europe? *HIV Medicine* (2008), 9 (Suppl. 2), 34–40

FF Hamers and AN Phillips: Diagnosed and undiagnosed HIV-infected populations in Europe. *HIV Medicine* (2008), 9 (Suppl. 2), 6–12