

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Antiretroviral-Based Therapy for HIV Prevention

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: Preventing human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection remains a public health priority, with approximately 40,000 new infections a year in the United States. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a proven strategy of using a once-daily antiretroviral therapy for prevention and can reduce the risk of HIV infection by over 90% in HIV negative persons at substantial risk for HIV. Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is an emergency medical intervention comprised of a 28-day course of antiretroviral medications to prevent infection following an isolated exposure of an HIV negative person. As part of a multidimensional strategy for primary HIV prevention incorporating lifestyle and behavior change, PrEP and PEP have the potential to significantly reduce the transmission of new HIV infections. Appropriate candidates for PrEP and PEP can be identified in any healthcare setting, and a comprehensive approach will require the participation of psychiatrists and mental health clinicians in screening and engaging patients.

APA Position:

1. **The APA supports the use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for the prevention of HIV infection in individuals at substantial risk, in combination with safer sexual and other behavioral practices.**
2. **The APA recognizes the important role that psychiatrists and mental health clinicians can play in recognizing HIV risk factors, encouraging HIV testing and evaluating patients for PrEP and PEP, and recommends that providers become familiar with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for PrEP and PEP use.**

References:

1. “Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 Nov. 2018, www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/prep/index.html.
2. “PEP.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 23 July 2018, www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/pep.html.

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