

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Recognition and Management of Addictive Disorders and Other Mental Illnesses Multimorbid with HIV

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Issue:

Multimorbid diagnoses of addictive and other psychiatric disorders complicate and perpetuate the HIV epidemic and magnify both HIV and mental illness stigma.

APA Position:

An integrated approach to the treatment of addictive disorders and other psychiatric disorders improves adherence to HIV care and antiretroviral therapy and is associated with better clinical outcomes. Integrated medical and psychiatric care can also decrease stigma and discrimination against persons with HIV and mental illness.

Recommendations:

1. Psychiatrists treating patients with substance use disorders are encouraged to stay abreast of psychosocial, behavioral and pharmacologic interventions.
2. Psychiatrists should provide primary and secondary educational efforts and maximize psychiatric treatment interventions to reduce HIV risk during acute exacerbations of psychiatric illness. This is especially important for individuals with serious psychiatric illness and comorbid substance use disorder. Both may contribute to HIV risk behaviors, for example high-risk sexual behavior and/or psychoactive substance intoxication in mania.
3. Through an integrated approach to HIV prevention and care, psychiatrists can work with primary medical care clinicians to coordinate appropriate screening, prevention, medical care, referral to specialists, and medical follow-up for all non-psychiatric medical conditions. Coordination of care is essential to maximize adherence to effective ART and to minimize drug-drug interactions and overlapping medication toxicities.
4. Interventions to reduce alcohol, stimulant, opioid, and other substance use disorders should include a recovery model utilizing evidence-based practices including harm reduction approaches, motivational interviewing and interventions, medications for addiction treatment (MAT), abstinence/12-step programs, and behavioral interventions that promote safer sex practices. As part

of this care, the psychiatrist should perform safety screening, including screening for intimate partner violence for which heavy alcohol and drug use is a known risk factor.

5. Psychiatric treatment of depressive disorders, PTSD, and other severe mental illnesses as well as addictive disorders improves clinical outcomes and decreases morbidity and mortality in persons with HIV.

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