

# Psychosocial Perspectives on HIV Testing and Treatments

*Section III: Chapter Eight*

Psychological factors contribute to the effectiveness  
of treatment....HOW??

# ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay test)

- Identifies the presence of HIV *antibodies* in the body
- A positive test=presence of HIV
- Two-week process (Now, about 20 minutes via blood)
- <https://youtu.be/02gE7SArfLw>
- <https://youtu.be/pCgZbfr3txY>
- Individuals who do not follow-up/seek treatment pose as a risk to themselves and communities

# The faster the results, the faster the counseling begins

- Addresses risky behaviors
- Addresses emotional health
- Propose future health behaviors
- Counseling post-test is standard in U.S.
  - Also involves repeat testing
  - Decrease perceived (and real) barriers to care
  - Negative results warrant counseling too (to address why the person was getting tested in the first place)
  - Counselling and testing is expensive: not all countries can make this available

# Rapid HIV testing

- Benefits:
  - Lessen stress and anxiety
  - Reduces rate of people not following-up
  - Counseling is immediate
  - Available more widely (physician's office, testing centers)
  - Minimize cost (in travel)
- Barriers:
  - Cost (time is money)
  - Not related to survival rates (let's think about this one)

# Treatments: Antiretroviral drugs

- Purpose: to slow the progression of HIV (21 types– most often used in combination)
- Allows immune system to recover; however, virus will continue to reproduce virus
- Drugs (alone) can add an additional 11.3 years to life expectancy
  - Add in stress management and emotional support– life expectancy can be about normal
  - DECREASE in transmission rates in communities with intensive-HIV treatment programs! How might that work? What are the mechanisms?

# The Psychology of Drug Treatments

- Poverty complicates HIV treatment (in some cases, so does wealth)
- Regimen adherence (how did you guys do in the game?)
- STIGMA— no one wants to be/feel “different”
  - HIV/AIDS stigma is perhaps the worst out there
- Drug resistance is a problem
- “Cocktails” can prove challenging for children

# HIV and Stress

- Stress on persons *infected* and *affected*
- Coping strategies and social support are key
- [Patient's Voices](#)
- Psychoneuroimmunology
  - We know psychological states affect immune functioning (lymphocytes)
  - Low psychological symptoms during multiple life changes=higher T cell count (improved immunity)
  - Early cases of HIV included dementia, cognitive impairment, and depression
  - HIV can invade central nervous system