

WHO Releases Updated Guideline on HIV Service Delivery

Guideline recommends integrating diabetes, high blood pressure and mental health care into HIV services.

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WHO has released an updated guideline to support integrated HIV service delivery, promote long-term adherence to antiretroviral therapy (ART), and improve the overall health and well-being of people living with HIV. In line with WHO's commitment to person-centred care, these recommendations reflect updated evidence, and the broader needs of individuals affected by HIV.

The guideline focuses on three main updates:

- A strong recommendation to integrate diabetes and hypertension care with HIV services.
Recent estimates suggest that up to 5% of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa have diabetes, and up to 25% have hypertension. This is similar to the estimates in other regions of the world;
- A strong recommendation to integrate mental health care for depression, anxiety and alcohol use disorders with HIV services. A high prevalence of mental health conditions has been reported among people living with HIV, with up to a third of people reporting symptoms of depression and/or anxiety. Alcohol use disorder is common among people with HIV, affecting at least 20% of individuals; it is associated with suboptimal medication adherence, unsafe sexual behaviour and poor mental health status;
- Updated, evidenced-based adherence support interventions for ART, such as counselling, reminders, tailored support from peers, lay supporters and health workers, and education. These evidence-based interventions help sustain viral suppression and improve clients' well-being by providing tailored responses to their needs.

“By integrating hypertension, diabetes and mental health care into HIV services, and ensuring timely, tailored support for adherence, we can help people stay on treatment and improve well-being,” said Dr Tereza Kasaeva, Director of WHO’s Department for HIV, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections. “The updated guideline reaffirms WHO’s commitment to delivering holistic, person-centred care that addresses the diverse health needs of people living with HIV and supports them to lead healthier, longer lives.”

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