

# HIV and COVID-19: What we know.

SHSQLD 23 June 2020

## **Dr Fabiola Martin**

MD, MDRes, FACHSHM, FRCP, FHEA

Consultant Physician in Sexual Health, HIV, HTLV Medicine

Senior Research Fellow, SPH, UQ

Lead Medical Educator, True Relationships & Reproductive Health

# Quick digest of published data:

- In 2018, in Australia: 27 545 PLWHIV, 89% were diagnosed, 87% of those diagnosed were receiving ART and 95% of those on ART had were well controlled.
- People living with well-controlled HIV infection have a normal life expectancy.
- There is no evidence that outcomes of coronavirus infection (SARS, MERS, COVID-19) for PLWHIV are worse.
- PLWHIV who have COVID-19 do as well as the general population if they have no other risk-factors and are well immune-reconstituted on ART.
- Patients with well controlled HIV have similar intensive care outcomes to HIV-negative individuals.
- HIV is not a predictor of mortality in people with acute lung injury admitted to intensive care.

# Recommendations: Co-infection with COVID-19

- Encourage people living with HIV (PLWHIV) if admitted to hospital to disclose their status to admitting physicians.
- Encourage admitting physicians to contact the HIV specialist team as soon as a PLWHIV is admitted.
- Do not stop ART even if the patient is very unwell without discussing it with the HIV specialist team.
- Specific treatment for COVID-19 is currently not available.
- Use paracetamol and not NSAIDs in people infected with COVID-19.
- COVID-19 may be associated with significant T-cell reduction, including CD4 cell count, in all patients: monitor and interpret carefully, consider OI prophylaxis.
- Check drugs-drug interaction on [www.covid19-druginteractions.org](http://www.covid19-druginteractions.org)

## **NOTE:**

- Offer people with COVID-19 infection an HIV test, to exclude HIV co-infection.
- HIV testing saves lives!

# Recommendations: Prevention of COVID-19 infection

- Encourage PLWHIV to practice physical distancing to avoid catching COVID-19 infection.
- Patients with an undetectable plasma HIV-RNA on ART & CD4 count of 200 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> (BHIVA) – 350 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> (ASHM) -or greater are not at higher risk of severe COVID-19.
- Suggest **strict** physical distancing (shielding) if immunosuppressed (i.e. not on ART, active cancer, OI) and/or low CD4 count.
- Consider OI prophylaxis if low CD4 count.
- Manage risk factors & co-morbidities associated with severe COVID-19 infection: hypertension, Diabetes mellitus, chronic cardio-vascular/kidney/liver/resp disease, smoking, fitness & healthy weight.
- Arrange for telehealth where possible.
- Reduce clinic visits and blood tests to a necessary minimum.
- Offer influenza and pneumococcal vaccine where indicated.
- Maintain their physical and mental wellbeing while practicing physical distancing: exercise at home, regular exposure to sunshine to maintain VitD levels, meditation, daily socializing via phone and video-conferencing.
- Encourage smoking cessation, reduce alcohol intake and manage rec drug usage.
- Encourage seeking help if feeling stressed, anxious or stressed to receive appropriate support and treatment.

# Resources

## British Medical Journal Sexually Transmitted Infection (BMJ STI): HIV & COVID-19

<https://soundcloud.com/bmjpodcasts/hiv-and-covid-19-what-do-we-know-so-far/s-8oQi6yp1Ol3>

### Main platform links to be used to promote the STI podcast:

- iTunes
- <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/sti-podcast/id356342980>
- Spotify
- <https://open.spotify.com/show/09IMBVmCcQnT7CzvMhq9PM?si=wxZ65-WhSL6wLe-kGkkrOw>
- Google Podcasts
- <https://podcasts.google.com/?feed=aHR0cDovL2ZlZWRzLmJtai5jb20vc3RpL3BvZGNhc3Rz&ep=14>
- Soundcloud
- <https://soundcloud.com/bmjpodcasts/sets/sti>

# Resources

## **British HIV Association:**

- [Intensive Care Society \(ICS\) and British HIV Association \(BHIVA\) statement on considerations for critical care for people with HIV during COVID-19](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and HIV - Responses to common questions from the British HIV Association \(BHIVA\)](#)
- [BHIVA COVID-19 interim adult antiretroviral guidance May 2020](#)
- [COVID-19 & shielding: advice for HIV clinicians, GPs and people living with HIV](#)
- [EACS & BHIVA Statement on risk of COVID-19 for people living with HIV \(PLWH\)](#)

## **Australasian Society of HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs:**

- [ASHM COVID-19 taskforce on HIV, Viral Hepatitis, and Sexual health](#)
- [COVID-19 and adults living with HIV: ASHM COVID-19 Taskforce interim recommendations](#)

## **Drug-Drug Interaction check:**

- [www.covid19-druginteractions.org](http://www.covid19-druginteractions.org)

## **Reporting COVID-19 cases:**

- NEAT ID Foundation: [www.NEAT-ID.org](http://www.NEAT-ID.org)
- The Lean European Open Survey on SARS-CoV-2 Infected Patients (LEOSS): <https://leoss.net>

## **Kirby Institute:**

[https://kirby.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/kirby/report/supplHIV2018\\_content\\_20180920r.pdf](https://kirby.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/kirby/report/supplHIV2018_content_20180920r.pdf)