# Concerns: High Anxiety

A high proportion of people with HIV suffer from anxiety, which is associated with lower rates of HIV treatment and adherence to treatment.

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About one in five people with HIV have symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), which in a recent study was associated with lower rates of antiretroviral (ARV) treatment, adherence to treatment and full suppression of the virus. Researchers analyzed survey data on 3,654 people who were a representative sample of the U.S. HIV population. Nineteen percent of the people with HIV had GAD—compared with a 2.7% prevalence among the general U.S. population. The people with HIV had higher rates of anxiety symptoms if they were women, lacked a college education, were living in poverty or had recently experienced homelessness. Among those with and without GAD, 82% versus 87% were on ARVs; 51% versus 62% of those on ARVs took their meds every day; and 56% versus 64% had a sustained undetectable viral load. People with GAD were also more likely to smoke and use drugs compared to those without the anxiety disorder.

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