



COVID-Monkey-AIDS Pox?

Don't be alarmed by social media posts making such claims.

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If you've scrolled through social media posts recently, you might have seen posts announcing, "the first person ever diagnosed with COVID-monkey-AIDS-pox" and stating, "This is getting serious guys." The posts also include a news video from LA-based broadcaster ABC7. Although the posts contain some facts, they twist reality into scary--sounding clickbait.

First off, there is no such thing as a single virus that causes COVID-19, mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) and HIV (the virus that, when untreated, can lead to AIDS). However, it is possible for an individual to contract each of these viruses separately within a short time period and become coinfecting with all three at once.

In fact, as Reuters reports in an article investigating the claims behind these social media posts, the ABC7 news segment originally aired in August 2022 and describes the first documented case of a person coinfecting with mpox, SARS-CoV-2 (which causes COVID-19) and HIV.

At the time, it wasn't known that COVID-19 and mpox could occur simultaneously. The case was later written about in the *Journal of Infection*.

In that unusual case, a 36-year-old Italian man returned from a trip to Spain in 2022 and, after developing various symptoms, including fever, sore throat and a rash, tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and mpox. He was also screened for HIV and various sexually transmitted infections and tested positive for HIV. Studies have shown that people with advanced HIV can develop more severe mpox illness.

Why would misleading posts declaring a super pox be gaining traction now? Not only do they prey on common fears, but they also play on current news.

This past summer, COVID-19 surged and a new version of mpox was spreading in Africa, with at

least one case documented in Europe. Meanwhile, updated vaccines are available for COVID, and vaccinations against the strain of mpox that appeared in the United States in 2022 also protect against the new mpox.

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