Concerns: Tests Miss Milder Mental Impairment

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The current screening tools used to detect neurocognitive impairment among people with HIV often let milder cases fall through the cracks. Before the modern era of antiretrovirals, severe cognitive impairment was widespread among the HIV population. Today milder cases are more the norm, and as many as half or more of people with HIV experience some form of impairment. In a review of the available research on such tests, scientists found that the two most popular—the HIV Dementia Scale and the International HIV Dementia Scale—could recognize severe impairment but fell short in picking up the other end of the spectrum. Consequently, the researchers concluded they could not recommend any of the available diagnostics for milder cases of neurocognitive impairment and advocated improved screening tools to keep up with the times.

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