



Older People With HIV Have Suboptimal Health

More than half of people living with HIV in the United States are now 50 or older.

January 9, 2023 By [Liz Highleyman](#)

A North American survey found that 76% of older people living with HIV have impaired physical, mental, sexual or overall health, researchers reported at IDWeek 2022. The study included 161 people ages 50 or older who participated in the 2019 Positive Perspectives survey; three quarters had been living with HIV for at least 10 years. More than half of people living with HIV in the United States are now 50 or older.

All participants said they had at least one additional health problem besides HIV. The most common were high blood pressure (42%), elevated cholesterol (39%), mental health problems (32%), insomnia (29%), arthritis (27%) and gastrointestinal problems (23%). What's more, 86% said they had two or more comorbidities, and 66% reported three or more. In addition to anti-retroviral therapy, 73% of respondents were taking at least one non-HIV medication, including 11% who took five or more.

A majority (60%) said they had suboptimal sexual health, followed by suboptimal physical health (48%), overall health (47%) and mental health (35%). Nearly one in five reported impairment in all four areas. The comorbidities most strongly associated with suboptimal health were mental health disorders, anemia, bone problems, insomnia and substance use disorders. The good news is that nearly one quarter of the respondents reported optimal health in all four areas, and another 23% reported optimal health in three domains.

"Care for older adults living with HIV requires improved models that ensure the broader impacts of HIV are better managed," Megan Dominguez, PharmD, of ViiV Healthcare, and colleagues concluded.

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