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CHALLENGES AND MANAGEMENT APPROACHES TO HIV-RELATED ISSUES IN UKRAINE

Yefremova V.V.¹, Panfilova H.L.²

¹State Expert Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine

²National Pharmaceutical University, Kharkiv, Ukraine

andreichuklika@gmail.com

Despite the fact that HIV/AIDS remains a significant healthcare problem, positive dynamics in the diagnosis and treatment of HIV infection have been achieved in recent decades. The development of new technologies has already changed the lives of many people, improving their quality of life and life expectancy, as well as reducing the risks of virus transmission. However, one of the critical issues that requires further attention is the problem of delayed HIV diagnosis. Unfortunately, stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS is a common obstacle, resulting in people seeking treatment at a stage when it requires significant financial and medical resources, and the risk of complications increases at least twice.

The objective of this review has been to analyse the current challenges associated with the spread of HIV infection in Ukraine, as well as the solutions and approaches that are already being implemented.

The study used retrospective analysis, synthesis of data from scientific sources, and reports from the Public Health Center of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

According to statistics, as of January 1, 2026, 130,676 people living with HIV are currently under medical supervision. Children born to HIV-positive mothers also require special attention; as of the same period, their number reaches 2,445. Given this situation, a number of progressive decisions have already been made. In particular, in 2025, the Standard of Medical Care for HIV Infection was updated. Fundamental changes have been made to the introduction of injectable pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection and the updating of approaches to antiretroviral therapy in line with the latest recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO). The approval of the Standard of Medical Care for Opportunistic Infections,

which prioritises the prevention and treatment of possible complications of HIV infection, deserves special attention.

This standard regulates approaches to health conditions and diseases commonly occurring secondary to immunodeficiency. Among the most dangerous are tuberculosis, herpes infections, pneumocystis pneumonia, and candidiasis. The main focus is on reducing mortality and improving the overall quality of life for people living with HIV. Early diagnosis and prevention are based on modern lab techniques, including molecular biology, serology, and cultural methods. The standard ensures the effective decision-making by multidisciplinary teams on chemoprophylaxis of opportunistic infections and the provision of targeted antiretroviral therapy aimed primarily at restoring the immune functions of the affected organism.

There has also been a positive dynamic in the use of rapid HIV tests: in 2025, the testing rate was 1,728,180 compared to 1,581,195 in 2024. As for antiretroviral therapy, as of January 2026, out of a total of 115,650 people, 91% of patients have achieved an undetectable viral load in their blood. These figures highlight the positive impact of integrating WHO recommendations, the best practices of leading countries, and the use of the most effective drugs and dosage forms. The development of pharmacology has made a significant contribution to both successful antiretroviral therapy and pre-exposure prophylaxis. In particular, in August 2024, the use of cabotegravir injections was launched, and by 2025, this drug became available in all regions of Ukraine. Thus, 12,454 patients received at least one dose of the drug for pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Nowadays, Ukraine has already taken several significant steps towards making HIV and AIDS just something from the past: updating medical care standards, modernising antiretroviral therapy, and actively introducing pre-exposure prophylaxis. But the issue of HIV spread affects each of us directly or indirectly. Unfortunately, the early stages of infection often cause few or no symptoms, so it is important to take care of your health and that of your family and friends. Awareness of HIV/AIDS, combating stigma, and timely testing are key to overcoming this global problem in perspective.