

Detection of HIV-2 and HIV-1/2 Dual Infections

HIV-2 is a retrovirus with a structure and replication program similar to HIV-1 but is distinct from HIV-1 in origin, epidemiology, spread, disease progression, genetic organization, and nucleic acid sequence^{37,38,267,268} (see Chapter 169). HIV-2 infections originally reported in West Africa are now present in Europe, especially Portugal, and in South Asia, including India.²⁶⁹ The CDC reports that African countries with at least 1% HIV-2 prevalence include Angola, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. In addition, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Niger, São Tomé, Senegal, and Togo are reported to have significant numbers of HIV-2 infections.²⁷⁰ New initiatives have been implemented to track HIV-2 epidemiology.²⁷¹ Infection with HIV-2 does not prevent infection with HIV-1,²⁷² sequential HIV-2 to HIV-1 infections have been documented,²⁷³ and dual HIV-1 plus HIV-2 infections are reported in West Africa and in India.^{269,274,275} The prevalence of HIV-2 remains low and may be decreasing in some areas of West Africa.²⁷⁶ In the United States HIV-2 remains infrequent but not rare.²⁷⁷ The CDC reported 242 cases in 1987–2010²⁷⁸; Torian and colleagues²⁷⁹ documented 62 HIV-2 infections in New York City between 2000 and 2008,²⁷⁹ and Hollenbeck and coworkers²⁸⁰ identified 12 patients in Providence, Rhode Island. The current prevalence in the United States is not known precisely. Individuals from countries with substantial populations of HIV-2 in West Africa and elsewhere emigrate to the United States, and the understanding of geographic distribution is useful in patient evaluation; as summarized by Gandhi and coworkers,²⁸¹ the HIV-2 epidemic has undergone complex dynamics and may be declining in West Africa, especially in younger individuals.

The ability to detect HIV-2 infection, discriminate HIV-2 from HIV-1, and identify HIV-1 plus HIV-2 dual infections has always been important from an epidemiologic and blood safety standpoint, but specific diagnosis has become essential in the era of effective ART. Specifically, HIV-2 reverse transcriptase is not sensitive to nonnucleoside reverse-transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI) antiretrovirals, such as nevirapine, efavirenz, etravirine, or delavirdine. This is due to a Y188L polymorphism naturally occurring in HIV-2. As a result, patients with HIV-2 infection (or HIV-1/2 coinfection) should not be treated with NNRTI-based regimens, and misdiagnosis of HIV-1/2 coinfection as HIV-1 monoinfection may rapidly lead to complex drug resistance.

Initially, 60% to 90% of sera from HIV-2 infected individuals reacted with HIV-1 ELISA kits^{282–284}; in the United States specific screening assays for HIV-2 were not initially developed because of the relatively few HIV-2 infections. Instead, combination screening assays²⁸⁵ were developed to improve the sensitivity of HIV-1 assays, often incorporating synthetic peptides, including those from immunodominant domains of HIV glycoproteins.^{286–292} Use of cross-absorption tests,²⁹³ competitive ELISA,^{294,295} and PCR assays were reported to distinguish infections.²⁹⁶

The development of an HIV-1/2 ELISA platform (e.g., GEENIUS [Bio-Rad]) that distinguishes whether reactivity is derived from HIV-1 or HIV-2 represents a particularly useful advance. The combination of rapid screening assay and point-of-care supplemental confirmatory assay offered, for the first time, an FDA-approved method for diagnosing HIV-2 infection in the United States.

Methodology for HIV-2 RNA levels has not been standardized to the same degree as HIV-1, and no FDA-approved tests are available for diagnosis; HIV-2 RNA assays are available for monitoring established disease.²⁶⁸ IFAs have been used to distinguish HIV-1 and HIV-2 infection,²³² but currently there are no FDA-approved HIV-2 IFA test kits. HIV-2 cultivation from infected individuals has been reported,²⁹⁷ but the frequency of infectious virus recovery was lower than that detected with HIV-1.²⁹⁷

As newly diagnosed cases of HIV are frequently referred for early initiation of ART, identifying the presence of HIV-2 either as a single infection or as HIV-1/2 dual infection is an absolute imperative. Gottlieb and coworkers²⁶⁸ have highlighted that achieving 90-90-90 targets for HIV-2 has lagged behind HIV-1, with a number of potential explanations. Torian and her colleagues²⁷⁹ have documented a prolonged (>1 year) delay in documenting the presence of HIV-2 after a first diagnosis with HIV infection. In light of consequences for the emergence of drug

resistance if NNRTI-containing regimens are initially used, careful assessment for HIV-infection must be considered in all individuals with HIV infection originating from, or ties to, West Africa. The CDC recommends HIV-2 testing for sex partners or needle-sharing partners of HIV-2-infected persons or individuals from countries with significant HIV-2 populations, individuals who have received transfusions or nonsterile needle exposures in countries with significant HIV-2 populations, and children of women known to be HIV-2 infected. Thoughtful consideration for HIV-2 must also be considered in individuals from West Africa who have been previously identified with HIV-1 and in whom HIV-2 has not been specifically evaluated; Torian and coworkers²⁷⁹ noted that greater than 60% of the HIV-2 diagnoses had an initial diagnosis of HIV-1 only; the absence of testing does not mean the absence of infection.

Little is known regarding the HIV-2 window period; recently Cazals and colleagues²⁹⁸ described HIV-2 seroconversion in detail in a single patient with seroconversion dynamics similar to that reported for HIV-1. An individual with symptoms consistent with HIV seroconversion had ELISA seroreactivity and p24 antigen reactivity within 21 days of symptom onset with an HIV Ag-Ab combination²⁹⁸; HIV-2 WB was indeterminate, but additional WB 50 days after symptom onset was positive. Performance characteristics of HIV testing assays in acute or recent HIV-2 infection have not been otherwise analyzed; third-generation HIV1/2 ELISA assays were less sensitive in detecting early HIV-2 infection.²⁹⁹ There are few available seroconversion samples for HIV-2; use of experimentally infected primates with simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV; a close relative of HIV-2) has been suggested, but this method relies on the efficiency of detecting cross-species antibody, and the kinetics of an immune response may not be identical to HIV-2 infection in humans.

Detecting Non-B HIV-1 Types and Subtypes Other Than Subtype B

HIV-1 is composed of four principal groups: a large group, M (main), representing the majority of HIV-1 pandemic viruses; O (outlier); N (not M and not O^{300,301}), and the recently isolated group P. The latter strain was identified in 2009 in a Cameroonian woman, and it is closely related to gorilla SIV (SIVgor), suggesting a different cross-species transmission compared with SIV in chimpanzees (SIVcpz).³⁰²

Group M viruses have been classified by phylogenetic analysis into a series of nine subtypes (A–J, except for E), five sub-subtypes, a growing number of circulating recombinant forms (circulating recombinant forms [CRFs], 58 so far), and an immeasurable number of unique recombinant forms (URFs). Non-B viruses account for almost 90% of HIV-1 infections globally and, due to travels and migratory waves, showed an increasing prevalence in previously subtype B-restricted areas (i.e., Europe and North America). In the past such variants were relatively difficult to detect with same sensitivity as subtype B, although more recent versions of ELISA assays have been optimized to include detection of non-B subtypes.^{303,304} Group O viruses are more distantly related to the group M, have been identified at relatively low frequency in localized areas of central Africa,³⁰⁵ and may have emerged after zoonotic events from chimpanzee or gorilla reservoirs.^{306,307} Other groups are quite rare; group N (*N* = 13) and P (*N* = 2) viruses detected in West Africa are likely zoonotic events from nonhuman primates. Of note, all types and groups are detected by HIV ELISA assays, even groups N and P.³⁰⁸

The performance characteristics for many HIV-1 kits have been optimized using HIV-1 subtype B. Incorporation of HIV peptides with broad cross-reactivity into third-generation ELISAs has enabled detection of non-B subtypes, including more distantly related type O.^{309–312} A peptide-based ELISA assay has been reported using V3 peptides to accurately discriminate among HIV and SIV viruses,³¹³ including group O, which detected group M and was used to identify the existence of group N isolates.³⁰⁰ HIV-1 M subtypes, group O, and group N viruses are detected by ELISA, WB, and fourth-generation assays techniques. Qualitative TMA/HPA testing has also performed well in detecting non-B subtypes; all A, C, D, E, F, G, N, and O subtypes were detected, although as described later (“HIV Testing for Blood Donor Screening”), some viruses have not been detected in blood product surveillance. As

discussed before, PCR-based assays for viral load measurements also have difficulty detecting and reliably quantifying HIV-1 RNA when testing diverse genetic variants of HIV-1, especially group O and N. Different assays may yield discordant viral load results. No extensive data are available regarding detection of CRFs.⁵⁴

Detecting HIV-1 Dual Infections

Two strains of HIV can infrequently infect the same person before host immunity develops, known as coinfection; otherwise, if the second strain is transmitted after seroconversion, this condition is named superinfection. One of the strongest markers of superinfection is the high frequency, at least 20% of the HIV pandemic, of recombinant viral strains worldwide. Clinical implications of HIV dual infection are acquisition of drug-resistant strains during effective therapy, thus leading to virologic failure and onward transmission of drug resistance if recombination occurs, and the impact on disease progression. Cornelissen and coworkers³¹⁴ showed that dual infection is associated with faster CD4 decline in patients with recent HIV infection. Detecting superinfection is difficult and hinges on detecting genetic differences between viral strains within the same individual: Frequent sampling; specific diagnostic assays; and sensitive sequencing methods, such as single-genome sequencing or next-generation sequencing, are fundamental. A new multiregion hybridization PCR assay in three regions of the HIV-1 genome (*gag p17*, *vpu*, and *nef*) was developed to detect the most common subtypes and CRFs in West Central Africa,³¹⁵ providing sufficient sensitivity and specificity so that it could be used as a screening tool in areas where multiple subtypes cocirculate with high prevalence, including areas of Europe.³¹⁶ Dual infections are difficult to detect and therefore difficult to quantify; studies show wide incidence variations, from no detected cases to rates close to the rate of incident HIV in the background population. This is due to wide variation of laboratory methods, sample timing and frequency, HIV-1 subtype, ongoing risk behavior, and ART use.

HIV Testing During Pregnancy or at Delivery

Diagnosis of HIV in pregnant women is a public health priority; the advent of effective therapy to reduce the risk of transmission has made such arguments more compelling. Diagnosis in pregnancy may be complicated by increased false-positive rates of ELISA screening assays with increased parity. In addition, women may present at delivery without previous evaluation, and rapid tests may be the only available modality to evaluate HIV infection expeditiously. In a study of 858 women diagnosed in labor, Constantine and coworkers^{317,318} have suggested that a single-screening ELISA at delivery is sensitive, although the use of two rapid ELISA assays have performance characteristics as for the standard ELISA-WB strategy. Current guidelines for standard prenatal care include information regarding HIV testing; routine opt-out testing, except in jurisdictions where testing requires written informed consent; and testing early in pregnancy and in the third trimester in individuals at high risk for HIV infection. Some experts recommend repeat testing for all pregnant women in the third trimester. For women who present at delivery with unknown serostatus, 24-hour availability of rapid testing along with initiation of ART based on a single positive rapid result is recommended.³¹⁹

HIV in Perinatal Diagnosis

Serodiagnosis of HIV infection in the perinatal period is complicated by the prolonged persistence of maternal antibody for approximately 18 months after delivery. Methods for diagnosing infection include the serial Aptima HIV-1 qualitative assay (plasma) and DNA PCR testing of peripheral blood mononuclear cells (whole blood or dried blood spots^{320,321}). The sensitivity and specificity of DNA and RNA testing methods have been reviewed³²²; detection of non-B subtypes by qualitative RNA testing (Aptima) has had excellent reported results, and DNA PCR may be suboptimal with false-negative results documented.³²³ The recent FDA approval of qualitative RNA testing (Aptima) for use in diagnosis (including pediatric diagnosis) may make this test the preferred modality. Alternative techniques to measure the presence of early HIV

infection include direct HIV cultivation using techniques standardized by the AIDS Clinical Trials Group to evaluate HIV infection; a recent summary reports use of sequential sampling and analysis using DNA/RNA or p24 testing. Two positive samples obtained after ≥ 1 month and after ≥ 4 months indicates the presence of HIV infection. Negative HIV infection is based on two DNA or RNA or p24 determinations at ≥ 1 month and ≥ 4 months of age, or two negative serologic tests obtained separately at ≥ 6 months of age; repeating serologic evaluation at 18 months in individuals with prior negative results is common.³²² HIV-1 NAT early after birth must be interpreted with care because infection may take place at parturition, and HIV-1 RNA levels in plasma may be relatively low at delivery even in true infection. Early introduction of ART after delivery may also confound diagnosis; HIV RNA and DNA levels may be suppressed as a result of therapy, and complete antibody seroconversion may not take place in the setting of early ART. In such circumstances perhaps the only method to identify the presence of infection is close monitoring and serial testing after completion of a defined course of ART.

Maternal-fetal transmission of HIV-2 is much less common than HIV-1 (mother-to-child transmission rate of 4% vs. 15%–45%, respectively) but may occur especially if women are infected during pregnancy. Diagnosis of HIV-2 infection is similar to HIV-1, although Faye and coworkers³²⁴ have reported that assays may be less sensitive than those for HIV-1. A full discussion of diagnosis of HIV infection in newborn can be found in the report by Read.³²²

HIV Testing for Blood Donor Screening

Laboratory methods for HIV detection were first implemented in populations as screening tools for blood products; more than 14,000 recipients of blood products as a risk factor for HIV infection have developed AIDS. Cases have decreased markedly; in the United States 40 adults and adolescents have been infected or developed AIDS after receiving blood screened as negative for HIV antibody,³²⁵ but none since 2008.³²⁶ Elsewhere, rare infections have occurred since the advent of NAT testing^{327–330}; in some cases, transmissions are due to genetic differences of transmitted virus not detected by NAT, highlighting the need for vigilance in understanding genetic variability of HIV within countries. The residual risk for HIV infection in the United States is currently $<1:1,000,000$ units transfused.³³¹

Blood surveillance procedures are designed to provide optimum safety of blood products; the screening phase begins with an interview and questionnaire, and donors may be screened out based on history; donors not screened out sign consent for donation and for HIV-1/2 testing with HIV-1/2 ELISA and NAT. Any sample reactive on either assay is discarded, and the sample is repeated in both screening assays; if the repeat screen is negative, a second screening assay is performed. If the second screening assay is negative, the sample is considered negative and the donor is not deferred. If the second screening assay is positive, the sample is considered repeatedly reactive and sent for confirmatory WB; positive WBs are repeated with a separate sample; and the results of ELISA and WB are reported to the patient with appropriate posttest counseling and referral. An individual with donor status of positive screening and with a negative confirmatory test remains under consideration. WHO recommendations for screening for blood safety involves a single screening assay for HIV infection; if reactive in a single test, the donation is discarded and the test repeated. The risk from blood donation in developed countries is relatively low³³²; recent analysis demonstrated the successful expansion of NAT screening over the 1998–2008 period, both in terms of numbers of countries screening and in terms of advances in technology and automation.³³³ The majority of NAT screening is now conducted with multiplexed HIV/hepatitis C virus (HCV)/hepatitis B virus assays, based on either transcription-mediated amplification (TIGRIS [Gen-Probe]/ULTRIO [Grifols, Los Angeles, CA] systems) or multiplex polymerase chain reaction (MPX), performed on highly automated instrument platforms that ensure reliable results with excellent sensitivity and specificity.³³⁴ Serologic screening must, however, be maintained, even with the most sensitive NAT testing performed on individual donations; rare low-viremic HIV-infected subjects (i.e., elite controllers) may indeed be seropositive but NAT

negative, given their unique control over viral replication. Overall, in the United States the estimated risk of HIV from transfusion is <1 per 10⁶ units transfused.

Worldwide, blood safety in general varies considerably; in an estimated 39 countries, WHO reported that blood donations are not routinely tested for HIV, and 47% of donated units in low-income countries are tested in the absence of quality assurance (http://www.who.int/bloodsafety/global_database/GDBS_Summary_Report_2011.pdf). Dedicated efforts to improve safety have been implemented; in 2003 the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) began supporting programs in 14 targeted countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean,¹⁵⁶ with improvements in blood donation infrastructure, increases in numbers of units donated, and decreases in HIV-reactive units. Challenges persist: a UNAIDS survey recently reported that >99% of all donations are appropriately screened for HIV in high-income and upper-middle-income countries; 76.2% to 83.2% of donations are appropriately screened for HIV in lower-middle-income and low-income countries.³³⁵

NAT has demonstrated a substantial impact worldwide. More than 270 million units have been screened by HIV NAT since its inception, and 244 (0.9/1 million) were NAT positive/serology negative. Although residual risk calculations may be overestimates,^{336,337} the residual risk for HIV infection in the United States remains <1:1,000,000 units transfused.³³¹ Rare infections have occurred since the advent of NAT testing^{327–330}; not all contaminated units result in infection.³³⁸ In some cases transmissions are due to genetic differences of transmitted virus not detected by NAT, highlighting the need for vigilance in understanding genetic variability of HIV within countries.³³⁷ Worldwide the demonstrated success of NAT has not yet been realized in all countries. The WHO Global Database on Blood Safety survey³³⁹ reported that in 2013 176 of 180 reporting countries screened blood donations for HIV; 70 countries used antibody testing only, 106 reported use of antigen + antibody testing, and a total of 44 countries used NAT.

HIV Testing in Tissue Procurement for Transplantation

HIV transmission from organs transplanted from infected individuals occurred before the availability of sensitive and specific testing. In adults and adolescents there have been at least 50 cases of HIV transmission through transplantation or artificial insemination, sometimes involving multiple recipients. Strikingly, a 38-year-old male donor who tested negative for HIV and HCV antibodies at the time of donation transmitted HIV and HCV to four recipients.³⁴⁰ A transmission event happened in 2009 from a living donor that resulted negative for HIV antibodies 79 days before organ recovery; a retrospective investigation revealed a reactive NAT on a stored sample obtained 11 days before transplant.³⁴¹ Both in the United States and internationally, donor screening before organ recovery has been based on ELISA testing since its introduction in 1985; after the implementation of NAT assays, greater than 50% of organ procurement organizations recently adopted this additional test to overcome the risk associated with the antibody window period. Such further screening raised the issue of losing more life-saving organs due to false-positive results: HIV transmission is an extremely rare event in the United States, and there is no nationwide policy for HIV screening for living donors. The CDC recommendations address (1) repeated donor testing with a combination of an HIV serologic test and HIV NAT as close to the time of organ donation as feasible logistically, but no longer than 7 days preceding organ donation; (2) all living donors should be advised of their obligation to avoid behaviors that would place them at risk for acquiring HIV infection before transplant surgery; and (3) for living donors with a history of high-risk behaviors (e.g., high-risk sexual activity or injection drug use) identified during evaluation, individualized counseling and a detailed discussion of specific strategies to avoid high-risk behaviors should be provided.

HIV Testing in Vaccine, Prevention, Postexposure, and Gene Therapy Studies

One recent issue concern in laboratory evaluation of HIV-1 infection is evaluation of patients enrolled in vaccine trials using one or more

HIV antigens for immunization. If the vaccines themselves are effective immunogens, it is possible that patients will artifactually “seroconvert” for HIV in the absence of true infection. For example, individuals immunized with a single gene product (e.g., gp160) may develop specific gp160 reactivity.³⁴² If such individuals already have a nonspecific reactivity for p24, then the combination of reactivity to gp160 and to p24 will result in positive HIV screening and supplemental assays. Current and planned candidate vaccines include multiple HIV components, and effective immune responses may affect positive routine testing. Vaccine-induced seropositivity has important social implications, and vaccine recruitment trials clearly and plainly address possible outcomes.³⁴³ Alternatively, patients in vaccine trials may become truly infected, and authentic infection requires identification. Careful history and physical examination are essential; application of NAT in such circumstances may yield useful results in establishing the presence of infection,³⁴⁴ and individuals receiving HIV DNA vaccines have not yielded positive HIV NATs. CD4 counts and percentage of CD4 cells in peripheral blood are also useful because serial samples are likely available for comparison in vaccine studies.

HIV Testing in Gene Therapy Studies Using Lentiviral Vectors

The recent advent of lentiviral vectors for gene therapy raises possibilities that portions of the vector may be expressed and potentially result in false-positive HIV testing. The backbone for a number of gene therapy vectors is a lentivirus (typically HIV), which can infect nondividing cells, thereby expanding their range of cell types in which therapeutic genes can be introduced. The genomes of these vectors are highly deleted, but RNA produced by the vectors can contain HIV and can therefore be detected by HIV RNA assays. These vectors do not encode HIV *gag* or *env* genes, and serologic assays for HIV antigens or p24 assays have been nonreactive. As a consequence, such individuals may have HIV testing results similar to recent HIV infection (HIV RNA positive/antibody negative). An early analysis of large series of individuals who have received autologous cells transduced with lentiviral vectors did not document reactive serologies or detectable retroviral nucleic acid in plasma.³⁴⁵ More recently, however, patients undergoing gene therapy have had detectable HIV RNA in plasma using conventional quantitative HIV RNA assays.^{346–348} In all of these cases detailed analysis revealed that authentic HIV infection was not present. It is imperative that analyses of such cases proceed in a rigorous, methodical, and thoughtful fashion. Thorough understanding of the vectors and viral RNA assay are essential. Analysis of sequential samples is necessary; sequencing the nucleic acid present in plasma, if present in sufficient quantities, will provide useful information, and patient-derived sequences identical to vector-derived sequences will identify the source of the positive HIV RNA result as the vector.

In certain gene therapy settings, defective retroviral vectors have been used to complement patient gene deficiencies; cells from which these defective viruses are propagated include other “helper” viruses and may contribute to development of malignancy in certain situations.³⁴⁹ Neither the nucleic acids nor gene products from the vectors or the helper cell lines are remotely related to HIV and are not sources of cross-reaction.

HIV Infection but Viral RNA Less Than 50 Copies/mL: HIV Elite Controllers

A small fraction of individuals infected with HIV do not progress to CD4 lymphopenia and do not have HIV viral RNA levels >50 copies/mL plasma in commercial assays; more sensitive single-copy assays do detect the presence of HIV in these so-called “elite controller” patients, and ongoing low-level HIV replication is detectable using sufficiently sensitive assays.^{219,350,351} Despite the low level of plasma viremia and substantial CD4 cell numbers, all such patients are ELISA reactive and fully WB positive. As a result, patients who are newly diagnosed with HIV and have reactive HIV-1/2 ELISA tests and are WB positive but have HIV RNA levels <50 copies/mL are likely to be elite controllers; the presence of a fully positive WB makes early infection much less likely. All such patients should be repeatedly evaluated to document

the presence of HIV infection and absence of viremia; such patients are actively studied in tertiary care centers,^{352–355} and referral for additional evaluation is often useful.

HIV Testing in the Setting of Acute Retroviral Syndrome or Other Acute Illness

Primary HIV infection may present as an acute viral syndrome with fever, lymphadenopathy, and rash (see Chapter 122). Diagnosis near the time of infection has obvious social, medical, and public health benefits, but not all screening strategies are equally effective in detecting primary HIV infection. TMA/HTA assays (Aptima³⁵⁶) are currently the most sensitive qualitative FDA-approved assays for acute HIV-1 infection. FDA-approved rapid/simple assays may not be as sensitive as standard third-generation ELISA assays. New fourth-generation ELISAs, as described earlier, have excellent performance characteristics and can detect antigens approximately 5 to 7 days after the appearance of nucleic acid. Of importance, the data published to date indicate the assays available in the United States are capable of detecting acute HIV infection in greater than 80% of individuals who are NAT positive but nonreactive or indeterminate in antibody-only assays. The window period for HIV infection may vary from patient to patient, and thus the value of a negative screening test must be weighed carefully but not exclusively. As outlined earlier, other acute infections may yield false reactivity in HIV screening assays. Similarly, primary HIV infection may present with relatively nonspecific symptoms and may give false-positive results for acute EBV infection. Thus review of such cases should be directed and comprehensive.

HIV Testing in Occupational Exposure

HIV-1 infection may be transmitted as an occupational exposure (see Chapter 298) in the hospital setting as a result of needlestick injury, transmission during surgery, and so forth; in outpatient dental circumstances; or other instances where contact favoring transmission may occur. It is essential that the serostatus of the donor patient be established as expeditiously as possible. Although testing in these circumstances is time sensitive, it still requires the same elements of counseling, consent, and confidentiality as standard HIV-1 testing. In the United States, in the opinion of the American Medical Association Council of Ethical and Judicial Affairs, involuntary HIV testing is acceptable in the event a health care professional underwent exposure but the patient refuses to be tested.³⁵⁷ By contrast, WHO has unequivocally rejected mandatory HIV testing,⁷⁵ except in screening of blood or blood-manufactured materials or in screening of donors before procedures involving transfer of bodily fluids, for instance, organ donation, artificial insemination, and transplantation.

In occupational exposures it is important to test the exposed worker at the time the event took place to establish baseline serostatus. Counseling and HIV testing should be performed on the exposed worker immediately, to rule out the possibility of preexisting but undiagnosed infection. Rapid ELISA testing may be used, especially if the donor is not thought to be acutely HIV-1 infected. In the event of a nonreactive rapid ELISA, it would be prudent to obtain routine ELISA and TMA/HPA tests to address the unlikely possibility that the rapid assay was insensitive to an early HIV-1 infection. Judicious use of RNA assays may also be used. It is essential to carefully scrutinize testing of donors in this circumstance because hospitalized or acutely ill patients may have a variety of conditions that may yield a falsely reactive HIV-1/2 ELISA. In the event the serostatus cannot be established, initiating ART is an appropriate option (see Chapter 298).

HIV Testing in Idiopathic CD4 Lymphopenia

Idiopathic CD4 lymphopenia (ICL) is an immunodeficiency characterized by repeated CD4 cell numbers <300 cells/ μ L (<20%), without a coexisting condition thought to be a cause of immunodeficiency, and the patient is HIV negative.³⁵⁸ ICL is obviously completely distinct from HIV infection, but patients with persistent CD4 lymphopenia and HIV nonreactive ELISA may be referred for additional evaluation. Careful history and repeated HIV testing with judicious use of appropriate NAT

will clarify these cases quickly so that they may be referred for appropriate and targeted care.

Factitious HIV Infection and AIDS Phobia

Cases of factitious HIV infection have been reported in the context of psychiatric dysfunction.^{359–362} The advent of multiple testing modalities, including home collection systems, may complicate patient presentation in factitious HIV. Careful history, application of routine algorithms, repeat standard assays, use of appropriate counseling or psychiatric consult services, and common sense may resolve most of these delicate cases.

Similarly, a number of individuals have reported substantial fear of HIV infection because of experiencing flulike symptoms. These cases are typically isolated occurrences but may occur in groups.³⁶³ In general these cases are typically resolved by routine evaluation and sequential testing; in the setting of coexisting obsessive-compulsive, anxiety, or paranoia disorders, such patients obviously require primary therapy for underlying illness as well, and infectious disease consultants play a key role in providing information, counseling, and dispelling myths while performing appropriate testing.

HIV Testing to Estimate Duration of Infection and Incidence

The HIV epidemic has been tracked by prevalence using rates of clinical disease (AIDS) and more recently by HIV seroprevalence. Estimates of incidence rates of HIV infection have been relatively difficult to obtain but are an important characteristic of epidemics, especially in area where infection rates may be changing rapidly. Application of serologic and nucleic acid assays has been useful in estimating duration of infection,³⁶⁴ with a general goal of identifying individuals within 24 to 48 weeks of infection.

Serologic assays have been developed taking advantage of two general characteristics of early infection: (1) decreased avidity of early IgG and IgM antibodies relative to avidity of antibodies in established infection and (2) delayed emergence of antibodies to p31 until after several months of infection. Assays based on either observation have been developed. Initial studies used “sensitive/less sensitive” (S/LS) ELISA assays and quantitative immunocapture assays for estimates of HIV-1 incidence rates.^{124,365,366} An S/LS (or “detuned”) ELISA approach uses a dual ELISA assay strategy that consists of a standard sensitive third-generation ELISA to detect all HIV infections and a detuned ELISA that does not detect early infections because of the decreased antibody quantity and avidity early in infection. Samples that are HIV reactive using the standard assay and nonreactive on the detuned assay are classified as recent infections. S/LS assays are generally applicable in epidemiologic studies of HIV-1 to characterize high-risk populations, incidence trends, and peak age incidence of infection.^{367–369} Subtype performance has not been extensively studied, and the assay is somewhat labor intensive.

A quantitative immunocapture assay (Aware BED; Calypte Biomedical, Portland, OR) represents a second-generation incidence assay designed to address some limitations of S/LS approach.³⁷⁰ Quantitative immunocapture assay measures the relative levels of HIV gp41-specific IgG as a fraction of the total IgG. The gp41 peptide is a synthetic peptide consisting of an 18-amino-acid immunodominant region of gp41 from subtypes B, E, and D, each ligated to a spacer, aminobutyric acid, and then conjugated in parallel as a branched-chain peptide.³⁷⁰ Field testing with >600 samples revealed a linear relationship between standardized detection of the BED peptide and duration of infection. The BED assay has been used in the United States^{124,371} and elsewhere^{372–375} to detect recent infections and estimate incidence rates.

In addition, an avidity index assay can be performed to discriminate between recent seroconversions and established infections; this assay is based on the comparison of test signal (measured as sample/cutoff ratio) between two replicates of fourth-generation assays in which the second replicate is added with guanidine hydrochloride, a denaturation agent that elutes low-avidity and -affinity antibodies after Ag-Ab bonds have formed. This application has been effective in discriminating recent from chronic HIV infections in field testing of subtype B and non-B HIV.³⁷⁶

Anti-p31 antibodies are detected in newer discriminating supplemental assays; the absence of anti-p31, indicating relatively early HIV

infection (Fiebig stage V, HIV infection likely <100 days). Not all assays detect antibody to p31 with equal sensitivity; Tuailon and coworkers³⁷⁷ reported the GEENIUS assay to be less sensitive in detecting anti-p31 compared with New Lav Blot I WB (Bio-Rad) or INNO-LIA HIV I/II Score Dot Blot (Fujirebio, Malvern, PA) assays; as such GEENIUS may overestimate early infection compared with other assays. Overall, as described by Ananworanich and coworkers,³⁷⁸ the development of fourth-generation and NAT assays has permitted a reevaluation of standard staging of early HIV infection and a new (fourth-generation) staging proposal that correlates with T-, B-, and natural killer-cell concentrations and cell-associated HIV DNA levels. As Robb and coworkers³⁷⁹ have reported, early HIV infection is heterogeneous, with wide variation in HIV RNA levels. New approaches developed to discriminate HIV reactivity^{380,381} may lead to improved diagnostics and greater understanding of this critical period.

Nucleic acid assays have also been used to estimate duration of HIV infection. Kouyos and coworkers³⁸² from the SWISS HIV Cohort evaluated whether HIV viral evolution and sequence diversity could correlate with time from infection. During acute/early HIV infection, viral quasiespecies are highly homogeneous, whereas they become more and more diverse within the following years. Sequence data obtained from routine genotyping using Sanger sequencing for clinical purposes (i.e., evaluation of drug resistance in protease and reverse transcriptase) show that the number of ambiguous nucleotides increased with the age of infection, and a fraction of ambiguous nucleotides greater than 0.5% provides strong evidence against a recent infection event, 1 year before sampling.³⁸² Andersson and coworkers³⁸³ and Grossman and coworkers³⁸⁴ demonstrated that this approach is useful in non-B subtypes. Additional approaches have been developed using other genome regions such as *gag*,³⁸⁵ new next-generation sequencing assays instead of Sanger sequencing,^{386–388} and additional measures of genetic variation (e.g., generalized or Shannon entropy^{385,387}). High-resolution amplicon melting temperature,³⁸⁹ clustering algorithms,³⁹⁰ Bayesian-derived time to recent common ancestor,³⁹¹ and Hamming distance³⁹² have also been used. Assays are useful with plasma but at present not with dried blood spots.^{393,394}

Recency assays, including both serologic and nucleic acid-based testing, have been limited by elevated “false recency” rates, including misclassifying advanced HIV infection as recent. A combined biomarker approach has demonstrated success superior to single assays alone.³⁹⁵ Laeyendecker and colleagues³⁹⁴ demonstrated the combination of LAG (limiting antigen) Avidity and Bio-Rad Avidity assays, combined with elevated viral RNA levels, were superior to single-assay approaches. These approaches, resulting in recent infection testing algorithms (RITAs), which integrate early infection serologic assays with viral RNA levels, provide critical information regarding trends in the course of the HIV epidemic. These approaches have clear usefulness in epidemiologic assays for HIV infection; they also serve useful benefit in patient management, especially in partner notification and contact tracing. Surveys of HIV specialists in England and Northern Ireland, where RITAs have been available for years, revealed that physicians were well acquainted with assays and were confident in communicating essential information, including contact tracing without undue patient anxiety.³⁹⁶

Home Collection and Self-Testing for HIV

The development of simple/rapid tests present new opportunities and the possibility of HIV diagnosis outside traditional testing facilities. Two kinds of HIV testing are available outside the health care facilities: home collection devices and home testing. Home collection devices are available in the United States and are FDA approved (Home Access; Home Access Health, Hoffman Estates, IL). Patients purchasing a home collection kit must contact the distributor using a toll-free telephone number, register a unique identifier contained in the kit, provide demographic data, and receive an educational pretest counseling session. Packaged material contains consent documents, and consent is implied when the individual registers the test by telephone. Patients prepare the dried blood spot sample, which is shipped for laboratory testing. After a short (3–7 days) processing time, patients contact the toll-free number for results, which are available through an interactive

voice response system or directly from a counselor. Testing includes both screening with HIV-1 ELISA (window period of 3 months) and confirmatory testing (immunofluorescence) for reactive screening results.²³⁶ All indeterminate and positive results are delivered by trained counselors. Home collection is considered a safe, confidential, and FDA-approved service and has been available in the United States since 1996.

In July 2012 FDA approved the OraQuick InHome HIV Test (OraSure Technologies, Bethlehem, PA) (see Table 120.1), intended as an over-the-counter test for consumer use as an aid in the diagnosis of HIV-1 and HIV-2. Such a test is not to be used by individuals younger than 17 years and is not intended to be used with specimens other than oral fluid. The kit provides a test result in 20 minutes, and results are for screening only; additional confirmatory testing is essential. Of critical concern, the window period for in-home testing (3 months) is relatively long, and nonreactive results obtained shortly after potential transmission events may provide a false sense of security in the setting of a potentially infectious period.

Self-testing expands the population that tests for HIV³⁹⁷ and can increase frequency of testing; it is unclear whether lack of additional counseling may miss opportunities to address risk behavior.³⁹⁸ Home testing can be quite reliable, and extensive review of performance characteristics³⁹⁹ in general revealed only minor difficulties in self-testing related to sample collection and overall directions. Implementation is not uniformly successful in all circumstances, however; in a population of commercial sex workers in Uganda, Oldenberg and colleagues⁴⁰⁰ measured a 15% to 23% incorrect interpretation of test images of strong positive, strong negative, and inconclusive home test results, and as high as a 61% incorrect interpretation of weak positive results. Study participants were peer-trained with the home testing kits and had limited health education and concomitant drug use, which represented possible correlates for increased frequency of incorrect interpretation, although such limitations do approximate real-world conditions. In addition, self-testing has been used successfully, can alleviate stigma, and can reach a patient population that does not typically engage the health care system or HIV testing.³⁹⁷ Self-testing may be attractive for use as a “point-of-sex” procedure.^{401–403} As the window period for home testing remains considerable, widespread replacement of clinic-based testing with self-testing could actually result in increased spread in high-prevalence circumstances⁴⁰⁴; health care and public health efforts workers caring for at-risk individuals who use self-testing should incorporate detailed and ongoing education discussions and posttest counseling. In a randomized study comparing standard care or provision of self-test kits with or without additional active follow-up, Wray and coworkers⁴⁰⁵ found individuals receiving self-test kits and follow-up telephone contacts with counselors had increased rates of repeat testing, risk reduction counseling, and PrEP referrals.

Self-testing has gained demonstrated acceptance in a number of studies worldwide^{406–409} and is recommended as an additional approach for HIV testing by WHO.⁴¹⁰ In 2015 a large initiative, HIV Self-Testing Africa (STAR), was implemented in Africa; by 2018 STAR distributed over 2 million self-testing kits in Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and new clinical trials (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT02718274>) are investigating the role of additional engagement to initiate ART. STAR will also evaluate acceptance and economic benefits of self-testing.^{411,412} Current challenges include issues of implementation scale-up,^{413,414} case reporting, and partner notification requirements.⁴¹⁰ New studies are in process to investigate HIV self-testing in a number of at-risk populations (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=HIV+self+testing&term=&cntry=&state=&city=&dist=>). These new studies will evaluate the utility of self-testing in various settings, ranging from deployment of self-testing kits in villages in Africa and China, to evaluating health approaches to expand home testing in individuals not typically engaged in health care in the United States. These and similar studies are likely to yield important new insights regarding self-testing and linkage to care that may widely expand the numbers of individuals undergoing testing. As a consequence, health care professionals engaging individuals newly identified with HIV infection should be well acquainted with the performance characteristics and limitations of these assays.

Other Human Retroviral Infections and New Retroviral Zoonoses

HIV-1 and HIV-2 epidemics arose from two independent zoonotic infections from distinct primate species, with zoonotic events unlikely. There are more than 40 SIV variants in nonhuman primates, with only a few having established infection with human-to-human transmission. Several key viral variants may have contributed to enhancing transmission.⁴¹⁵ The precise circumstances of these cross-species events remain uncertain, and practices and behaviors continue so that new zoonotic retroviral infection remains possible. Evaluation of patients with immunodeficiency will undoubtedly involve testing for known retroviruses, and the possibility of novel infections should be considered. Primate hunter/butchers exposed to animals in which infection with SIV is endemic may show evidence of exposure using sensitive laboratory-based assays to detect cell-mediated immunity to SIV⁴¹⁶ but are consistently negative in HIV-1/2 ELISAs. There are, however, numerous distinct retroviruses in primate species, and the sensitivity of currently approved assays for the detection of more distantly related viruses is uncertain but is likely to be low. Yang and coworkers⁴¹⁷ have reported the design of new peptide ELISA assays using Env gp120 V3 sequences from several HIV-1 M, N, and O isolates and from diverse SIV isolates. Such assays, which have demonstrated robust performance in field detection of HIV and SIV, may have additional utility in screening potentially contaminated bushmeat and thereby prevent future zoonotic events.⁴¹⁸

New zoonotic infections have been detected in persons from Central Africa with extensive contact with primate blood and body fluids. Using sequential strategy of HTLV serology, followed by amplification using primers with sequences shared by primate T-cell leukemia viruses, two primate retroviruses were identified in humans.⁴¹⁹ Primate T-cell viruses are genetically distinct from HIV-1 and HIV-2 and should not yield reactive HIV-1/2 ELISA or NAT results.

Spumaretroviruses are members of the Spumaretrovirinae, a subfamily of Retroviridae and are distinct from the Orthoretrovirinae subfamily to which HIV belongs. Spumaviruses are present in a number of mammal families (e.g., bovine, equine, feline), including numerous nonhuman primate species and Old and New World monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas, baboons, and orangutans.⁴²⁰ Most macaques are seroreactive by 3 years of age. Spumaviruses of cows, cats, and horses do not infect humans, but simian spumaviruses are readily transmissible to humans. Typically, primate veterinary handlers, bushmeat hunters, and others with occupational or other direct primate contact^{421,422} may be infected. Although foamy virus infection *in vitro* results in dramatic cytopathic effect, and simian foamy virus (SFV) may augment SIV pathogenicity,⁴²¹ foamy viruses have not been associated with disease in humans.⁴²¹ In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Switzer and coworkers⁴²³ measured a seroprevalence rate of 0.5% among individuals in rural villages with routine and close contact with nonhuman primates, and higher rates (2.2%–11.1% PCR positive) have been reported by Engel and coworkers⁴²⁴ in Bangladesh and by Muniz and coworkers⁴²⁵ in Brazil, where 18% of primate handlers were seropositive for SFV, but additional study is essential to document human-to-human transmission. SFV is not closely related to HIV or SIV and should not be responsible for reactive HIV-1 serology or NAT.

Cross-species transmission of retroviruses from other species has been considered as a possible consequence of xenotransplantation, as candidate species for tissue donation all harbor endogenous retroviruses, especially porcine endogenous retrovirus (PERV) in pig species.^{426,427} Endogenous retroviruses present in animal genomes may not be expressed in the host species but may be inducible upon culture *in vitro* and transmitted to human cells.⁴²⁸ Receptors for PERV are expressed in a variety of tissues,⁴²⁹ and PERV is resistant to most current antiretrovirals.⁴³⁰ Thus one concern is that endogenous retrovirus production may not be detected at time of harvest but may be induced after transplantation. Concerns for potential retroviral expression with development of zoonotic disease from other porcine and other tissue has prompted debate and recommendations on testing of xenotransplanted tissue for the presence of retroviral sequences and the ability to induce retroviruses *in vitro* from candidate tissues.^{431,432} No evidence, however, of PERV transmission to humans has been demonstrated,⁴³³ and PERV genomes undergo inactivation due to extensive APOBEC (a cellular cytidine

deaminase)–mediated hypermutation.⁴³⁴ Similarly, studies in nonhuman primates have not detected PERV in experimental xenotransplants,⁴³⁵ although transmission to severe combined immunodeficiency disease (SCID) or nucleotide oligomerization domain (NOD)/SCID mice has been reported in pancreatic islet transplants.^{435,436} PERV antigens are serologically distinct from HIV.⁴³⁷

REGULATORY ISSUES

Regulation of HIV Testing Modalities

HIV infection and AIDS are conditions with active constituencies among the public and relatively high-profile media attention. Although the scientific debate over the cause of AIDS has justifiably been put to rest,⁴³⁸ and HIV testing has been largely accepted, material in the lay press continues to circulate that has erroneously criticized or misinterpreted HIV testing sensitivity and accuracy (e.g., www.aliveandwell.org, www.duesberg.com, virusmyth.net, <http://ed-sherbeyn.com>). Physicians, scientists, and the public require accurate information regarding the materials and procedures used for HIV testing (UNAIDS.org/special). Numerous individual kits are available for HIV testing; in the United States the CDC surveys laboratories performing HIV testing through routine performance evaluations (MPEP), and FDA reviews quality control and licensure of these products. A list of FDA-approved tests is maintained at www.fda.gov/cber/products/testkits.htm. Worldwide, WHO has supported distribution of kits to resource-poor countries since 1998 and maintains a list of kits meeting WHO performance specifications (www.WHO.int); WHO recommends that any kit manufactured for distribution should be approved by regulatory agencies in the home country of manufacture.

Regulation of HIV Reporting

HIV prevalence and incidence data represent critical strategic information and the basis for public health response to the epidemic. Reliable and responsible reporting of HIV infection is essential to achieve accurate surveillance and maintain public trust. Integrating reporting into public health programs planning eradication of HIV infection and clinical programs that link individuals to care will maximize the use of these data. The availability of home testing and anonymous testing modalities expands the populations that may access HIV testing, especially among key populations, but will provide, at best, haphazard reporting. An exhaustive analysis⁴³⁹ reached the critical conclusion that although passive epidemiologic approaches have been useful, active data collection from key populations is essential for comprehensive understanding of the HIV epidemic, to develop useful datasets for use in monitoring programs addressing HIV-infected individuals and to evaluate their effectiveness.⁴³⁹ Achieving “90-90-90” objectives requires use of an expanded HIV diagnostic database. Development and use of unique identifiers for patients, especially in key populations, will be useful in linking individuals across clinical and epidemiologic platforms and may address limitations of current data collection strategies.

CONCLUSION

HIV diagnosis is performed for a variety of purposes: epidemiologic surveillance, individual testing, and protecting supply of blood products and tissues for transplantation. Establishing the diagnosis of HIV infection in individuals is a process that optimally requires a coordinated effort among patients, health professionals, and the laboratories. Of critical importance, the use of HIV testing modalities in PrEP and PEP circumstances places a substantial burden on the performance characteristics of testing modalities to detect the presence of HIV in low-prevalence populations and in early HIV infection. Not all testing modalities are equally useful for these demanding circumstances. The contribution of infectious disease specialist in diagnosis will be invaluable and should proceed from medical history and physical examination to laboratory diagnostic testing.

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The Immunology of Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection

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The interactions between the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the human immune system are extraordinarily complex, as evidenced by the highly variable rates of disease progression observed in HIV-infected individuals. Indeed, even individuals who were infected from a common source may experience widely divergent clinical outcomes.^{1,2} HIV subverts the immune system by infecting CD4⁺ T cells that normally orchestrate immune responses and by activating the immune system and inducing a replication-permissive microenvironment that the virus uses to its own advantage. The discoveries that in addition to the CD4 molecule, the primary receptor for HIV, certain chemokine receptors function as essential HIV coreceptors for HIV entry into target cells, whereas other receptors facilitate entry or propagation have expanded the scope of host factors that play a role in the pathogenesis of HIV-induced disease.

The lack of recognizable and consistent correlates of protective immunity in HIV infection continues to hamper vaccine development and immunotherapeutic approaches to HIV disease. Robust HIV-specific immune responses, both humoral and cell mediated, are mounted by most infected individuals. Nonetheless, the vast majority of untreated HIV-infected individuals experience inexorable disease progression, resulting in profound immunodeficiency, despite the presence of these robust antiviral immune responses. In this regard, qualitative in addition to quantitative aspects of virus-specific immune responses clearly are important in the containment of viral replication.

The progress that has been made to date in understanding the pathogenesis of HIV infection is unparalleled. The availability of effective combination antiretroviral therapy (ART) has had extraordinary clinical benefits for patients, has diminished the transmissibility of virus from an infected to an uninfected individual, and has also provided important insights into the immunologic and virologic factors associated with the control of HIV infection and disease progression. Studies on cohorts of well-defined HIV-infected individuals, including long-term nonprogressors/elite controllers (LTNP/ECs) and those initiating ART early after infection, have also provided important insights into HIV immunopathogenesis. However, fundamental questions remain regarding the nature and scope of the precise pathogenic mechanisms of HIV disease. It is clear that HIV induces dysfunction of almost every element of the immune system and that the pathogenesis of HIV disease is multifactorial.³⁻⁵ In this regard, a great deal is known about how HIV hijacks the immune system by targeting lymphoid tissues and perturbing the immunoregulatory balance; however, any attempt to manipulate these enormously complex and intertwined immunologic parameters for the purpose of inhibiting HIV replication without untoward effects is a daunting task. Nonetheless, progress in the understanding of how viral replication can be restricted with immunotherapeutic interventions is providing new treatment and potentially curative opportunities.⁶⁻¹¹

HIV ENTRY AND DISSEMINATION HIV Receptors and Entry Into Cells

CD4 was identified as the major cellular receptor for HIV fusion and entry in 1984.^{12,13} Additional factors for viral entry were suspected, yet remained elusive for many years until the recognition of HIV coreceptors. In late 1995 and early 1996, a series of papers was published that altered

our understanding of how HIV enters a target cell. The first report, by Cocchi and coworkers,¹⁴ identified the CC chemokines macrophage inflammatory protein (MIP)-1 α , MIP-1 β , and RANTES (regulated on activation, normal T-cell expressed and secreted), also known as CCL3, CCL4, and CCL5, respectively, as major components of CD8⁺ T-cell-derived HIV suppressor factors. They observed that these chemokines, in combination, could inhibit the infection of activated CD4⁺ T cells by certain strains of HIV-1, HIV-2, and simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV). Subsequently, a chemokine receptor, CXCR4, together with CD4, was required for entry of X4 viruses into target cells but was not used by R5 strains.¹⁵

In a separate line of research, Paxton and coworkers studied a population of individuals who had been exposed repeatedly to HIV-infected partners but who remained uninfected.¹⁶ They identified two individuals whose CD4⁺ T cells were refractory to infection with R5 strains of HIV, but were easily infectable with X4 strains. In addition, cells from these individuals produced high levels of MIP-1 α , MIP-1 β , and RANTES, the same chemokines previously identified as suppressors of HIV infection. Shortly thereafter, the chemokine receptor CCR5 was identified and shown in a series of papers to be a coreceptor for cellular entry of R5 strains (Fig. 121.1).¹⁷⁻²¹ Subsequently, a mutant allele of the CCR5 gene was described that contained a 32-bp deletion resulting in a truncated nonfunctional coreceptor for HIV entry.^{22,23} Because CCR5-utilizing HIV is almost universally responsible for primary infection, individuals homozygous for the CCR5 mutation are almost completely protected from HIV-1 infection.²⁴ Heterozygosity for the CCR5 mutation results in reduced expression of CCR5 on the cell surface. Although heterozygosity for CCR5 does not appear to afford protection against HIV-1 infection, it may result in slowed progression of disease in HIV-infected individuals.²⁴ Conversely, several polymorphisms in the CCR5 gene and its ligands have been associated with more rapid disease progression.²⁵ Since the report of a single case of long-term control of HIV-1 in the absence of ART by genetic targeting of CCR5,²⁶ deletion of the CCR5 gene through either ablation followed by stem cell transplantation from a CCR5-deficient donor or gene therapy to block or delete CCR5 has been proposed as one of several potential strategies for eradicating HIV from infected individuals.⁹ Nonetheless, the reproducibility and practicality of such an approach currently remains in doubt, especially for the tens of millions of individuals currently living with HIV in resource-poor countries.

Over the past two decades, many other receptors have been suggested to play a role in HIV entry into target cells. There is a general consensus that CD4 and a chemokine coreceptor, usually either CCR5 or CXCR4, are essential for viral entry into target cells, whereas other receptors may serve merely to facilitate infection or transmission of HIV. In this regard, several pattern recognition receptors (PRRs), including dendritic cell (DC)-specific intercellular adhesion molecule 3-grabbing nonintegrin (DC-SIGN) and related calcium-dependent lectins are regarded as important attachment receptors for HIV and may play an important role in early events of transmission (see next section).^{27,28} Attachment factors can also enhance cell-to-cell spread via the formation of virologic synapses (see Fig. 121.1). The integrin $\alpha_4\beta_7$ has been shown to bind the HIV envelope glycoprotein gp120 and serve as an attachment receptor for HIV.²⁹ Most recently, treatment with an antibody that targets $\alpha_4\beta_7$ has been shown to prevent and restrict SIV replication in a nonhuman primate (NHP) model.³⁰ The interaction between $\alpha_4\beta_7$ and gp120 may be especially important for replication in the gut-associated lymphoid

^aAll material in this chapter is in the public domain, with the exception of any borrowed figures or tables.

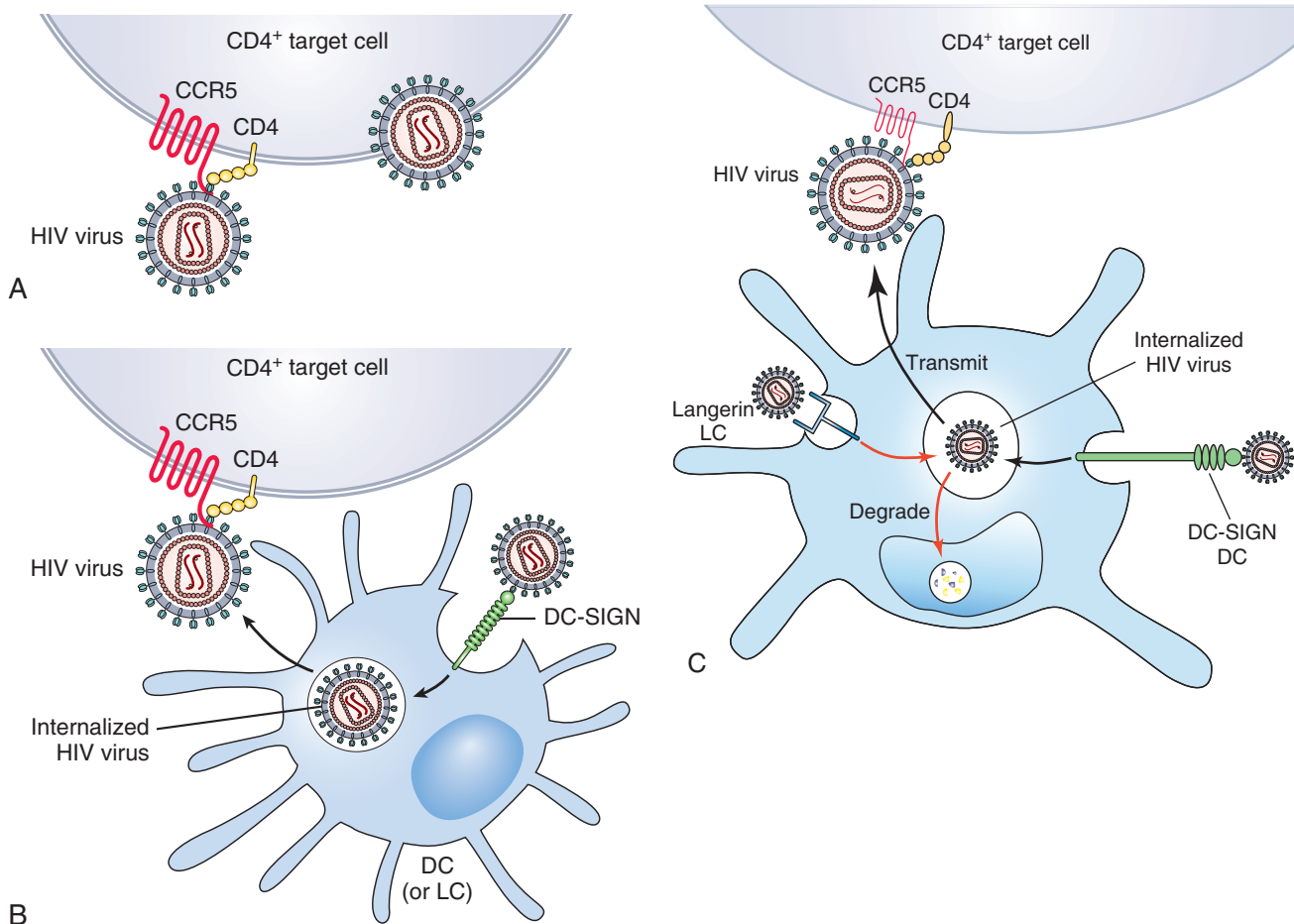


FIG. 121.1 Model of virus-cell infection and cell-to-cell transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). (A) CCR5-utilizing strains of HIV (R5) infect CD4⁺ target cells by binding to both CD4 and the chemokine receptor CCR5, followed by fusion and entry into the cell. (B) Cell-to-cell spreading of virus can occur by transinfection, whereby a DC or LC captures virus through a C-type lectin receptor such as DC-SIGN or langerin, a process thought to occur both at the site of transmission and in lymphoid tissues. After capture, the DC internalizes the virus into a cellular vesicle and transfers it to a target CD4⁺ T cell, whereas the LC degrades the virus in a TRIM5 α /langerin-dependent process. However, HIV degradation in the LC may be reversed by inflammation and coinfections. (C) Passage of virus from one infected cell to another uninfected target cell also occurs, and both processes can be enhanced by interactions between various ligands and host attachment receptors; for example, the binding of HIV envelope gp120 to the integrin $\alpha_4\beta_7$ leads to binding of LFA-1 to ICAM-1 through a cascade of activation steps. These interactions coalesce to form virologic synapses that can enhance virus spreading by physical proximity and possibly by excluding neutralizing antibodies. DC, Dendritic cell; DC-SIGN, dendritic cell-specific intercellular adhesion molecule 3-grabbing nonintegrin; LC, Langerhans cell.

tissues (GALT), where this integrin is preferentially expressed on resident CD4⁺ T cells.²⁸ In addition, the binding of gp120 to $\alpha_4\beta_7$ leads to activation of another integrin, lymphocyte function-associated antigen 1 (LFA-1), which also enhances the replication efficiency of HIV. This receptor may also play a role in the facilitation of HIV transmission across genital mucosal surfaces.²⁸

Dissemination of HIV Infection

It remains unclear which cell type is actually the first to become infected after exposure to HIV. The most frequent route of exposure occurs through sexual transmission (Fig. 121.2), with less frequent routes including blood and mother-to-child transmission.³¹ However, regardless of the route of entry, rapid migration to regional lymph nodes is followed by dissemination via the bloodstream to various lymphoid tissues (see Fig. 121.2). Massive depletion of memory CD4⁺ T cells in the GALT has been shown to occur very early after SIV and HIV infections,^{32–35} although there is some debate as to whether the depletion is a result of direct infection, bystander effects, or both.³⁶

In early studies of macaques exposed to SIV intravaginally, myeloid dendritic cells (mDCs) in the vaginal mucosa were identified as the first cells to contain SIV DNA at approximately 2 days after exposure.³⁷ Improvements in in situ hybridization and imaging techniques have provided better insight into the early events of virus transmission,

particularly in NHP models, although there still remains debate regarding which cells are infected first. The answer may depend on the type of mucosal transmission, whether vaginal, rectal, or penile, with important variables that include target cell availability and attributes of the mucosal epithelial barrier.^{38,39} Nonetheless, DCs, especially the specialized DCs called Langerhans cells (LCs), in addition to macrophages, interstitial DCs, and resting CD4⁺ T cells are all potentially among the first cells to capture and/or replicate HIV.^{28,40} Various studies of heterosexual transmission in NHPs have also shown that both cell-free and cell-associated virus in semen, including virus associated with macrophages and to a lesser extent with CD4⁺ T cells, can penetrate the vaginal epithelium and rapidly disseminate to lymphoid tissues.⁴¹ Given the difficulties of studying early events of HIV infection in humans, various organ cultures, including intact human cervical tissue explants, have been used as models of HIV transmission. Exposure of cervical explants to HIV has demonstrated that intraepithelial CD4⁺ T cells and LCs rapidly bind virus.^{42,43} HIV target cells, including macrophages and CD4⁺ T cells, and stromal DCs and LCs are also present in the male genital tract and are especially abundant in the foreskin.³¹ The very strong protective effect of circumcision on HIV transmission is suggestive of a role for cells of the foreskin in susceptibility to HIV infection.⁴⁴ These areas of research have also advanced considerably over the past several years, at least in part driven by a growing interest in preventing

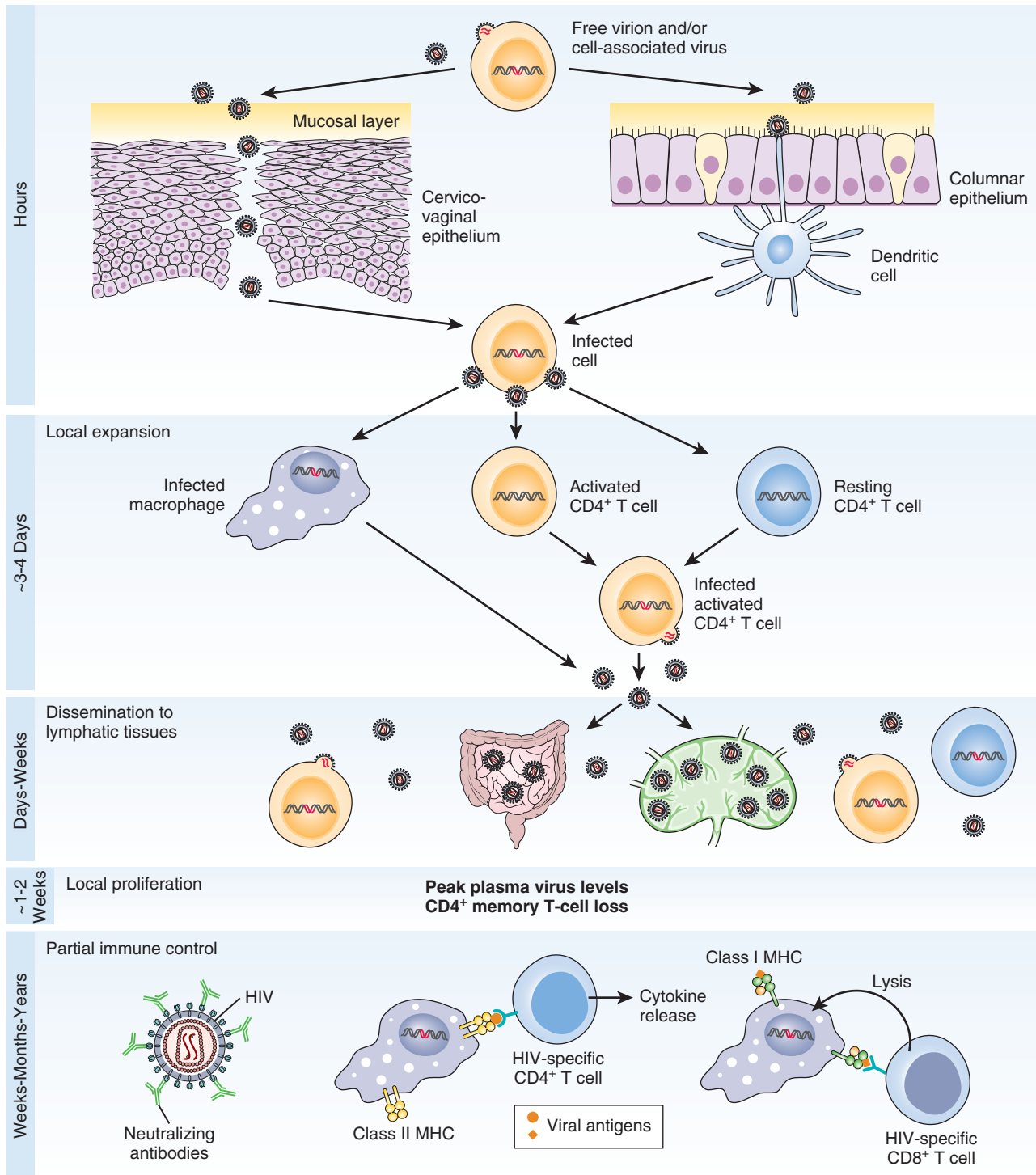


FIG. 121.2 Initial infection and dissemination of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. The sequence of events after vaginal or rectal transmission includes the following: (1) crossing the mucosal barrier; (2) interaction of virus with host cells, such as dendritic cells, that transport HIV to the paracortical regions of draining lymphoid tissues, leading to infection of CD4⁺ T cells and systemic dissemination of HIV infection in various lymphoid tissues; macrophages can also be infected in this manner, although they are not felt to efficiently produce virus for wide dissemination; and (3) induction of HIV-specific immune responses, beginning with CD8⁺ T cells and following with antibodies that provide incomplete control of viremia. *MHC*, Major histocompatibility complex. (Modified from Haase AT. Perils at mucosal front lines for HIV and SIV and their hosts. *Nat Rev Immunol*. 2005;5:783–792; with permission.)

transmission with topical microbicides and various inhibitors that can directly target HIV, including inhibitors of CCR5 binding to HIV or neutralizing antibodies.⁴⁵ There has also been considerable interest in identifying the earliest events of HIV transmission, given the evidence that the majority of mucosal infections are established by a single or a few viruses; furthermore, factors such as microbreaches, hormones,

and inflammatory responses can affect transmission.^{31,39} A better understanding of these events is thought to be essential for advancing HIV vaccine strategies and other strategies aimed at reducing the rates of HIV transmission.³¹

DCs and LCs are capable of retaining infectious virus on their surface or within endosomal compartments for extended periods of time, thus

allowing HIV to remain shielded before encountering a target cell for productive replication. It is somewhat unclear how retention of infectious virus is mediated, although several lectin and nonlectin receptors expressed on DCs and LCs have been proposed.²⁷ Given that some of the proposed HIV capture molecules such as DC-SIGN are expressed on DCs but not on LCs, it is likely that this process can be achieved by means of a variety of different mechanisms. For example, whereas degradation is the predominant outcome when HIV is endocytosed into LCs by the C-type lectin langerin (see Fig. 121.1) and the host restriction factor TRIM5 α (tripartite motif-containing protein 5 α) is recruited,⁴⁶ this antiviral effect may be abrogated by coinfections and inflammatory responses.²⁷ Collectively, the preponderance of evidence indicates that LC–T-cell or DC–T-cell conjugates enhance HIV replication via what has been termed a *virologic synapse* (see Fig. 121.1). Furthermore, whereas LCs are thought to be largely sessile, DCs are uniquely poised to carry HIV from tissues in which the initial rounds of viral replication occur to the regional lymph nodes, where CD4⁺ T cells become infected after contact with DCs. This leads to subsequent rounds of virus replication and spread in the absence of HIV-specific immune responses. Thus lymphoid tissue plays a key role in the initiation and dissemination of HIV infection.

HIV-SPECIFIC IMMUNE RESPONSES

Although the immune response to HIV has been extensively studied, a number of fundamental issues remain unresolved. Among the most important of these is that it remains unclear how HIV avoids immunologic control in most infected individuals. It is striking that unlike the situation with most other viral infections, the human host does not consistently mount an immune response that is able ultimately to eliminate the virus from the body or even suppress it. NHP models have been useful for the study of retrovirus-specific immunity, immunotherapies, and vaccines. Through passive transfer studies or studies involving depletion of CD8⁺ T cells in experimental animals, insight into the various facets of virus-specific immune responses have been extended from correlative studies in humans. It is known that passive transfer of virus-specific antibodies can protect against retroviral infection, and cellular immune responses can control viral replication in NHP models; in addition, there are indications for similar outcomes in humans. Furthermore, insight into the breadth and magnitude of HIV-specific immune responses in HIV-infected individuals is beginning to inform new strategies for the development of effective prophylactic or therapeutic vaccines.

Humoral Immune Responses

In most individuals who acquire HIV, the virus rapidly establishes a persistent infection and evades the antibody response of the host. Although antibody responses capable of binding multiple HIV encoded proteins can be detected weeks to months after infection, the response to the surface glycoprotein (Env) is the most important with regard to effector functions against virions or infected cells.⁴⁷ The constant fragments (Fc) of immunoglobulin G (IgG) antibodies bound to Env expressed on infected cells can in turn bind to receptors on effector cells (Fc γ Rs). These cells can mediate antibody-dependent cellular phagocytosis (ADCP) in the case of monocytes, macrophages, or DCs or antibody-dependent cellular cytotoxicity (ADCC) in the case of perforin-bearing cells such as natural killer (NK) cells or monocytes.⁴⁸ Other antibody effector functions include those that directly lyse virions such as the binding of IgG constant regions (Fc) to C1q, to initiate the classical complement cascade. By far the most extensively studied antiviral function, possibly because of its dominant role in protection against infection, is neutralization through blockade of viral entry to target cells by binding to Env. Any single antibody may have one or several of these effector functions, such as HIV-specific neutralizing antibodies that also mediate ADCC.

There are several features of the Env protein that pose challenges for mounting broad and potent antibody responses to diverse HIV isolates. The Env subunits gp120 and gp41 noncovalently associate and trimerize into the functional viral spike that is very heavily glycosylated. These glycosylated surfaces are poorly immunogenic and provide the virus with what has been termed a *glycan shield*.⁴⁹ Some conserved epitopes such as

those at the apex of the trimer or the CD4 binding site can be partially occluded by glycosylation, which would limit antibody access. Perhaps the greatest challenge to developing broad and potent recognition of HIV is the level of genetic variation. The sequence diversity of Env is high within geographically defined populations and even within a single infected patient. Mutations that occur during the process of reverse transcription and a prolonged duration of infection generate highly diverse viral sequences that coexist in the plasma.^{50,51} The level of diversity of HIV is considerably higher than that of most human RNA viruses and is likely a major contributor to the paucity of cross-neutralizing antibodies in the majority of HIV-infected individuals. Even when compared with influenza, which is also an RNA virus that undergoes high rates of mutation, the HIV variability in one individual is often greater than that of the influenza virus circulating in the community for an entire season.⁵² HIV viral sequences may vary between 10% to 16% in the plasma of a given chronically infected individual.⁵¹

Despite these challenges the prevalence of sera with broad neutralizing activity is not rare in chronically infected people. Depending on the neutralization criteria that are used in defining breadth of sera, antibodies with broad neutralizing potential have been shown to arise in approximately 20% to 50% of HIV-infected individuals.^{53–56} Sera from these patients are active against difficult-to-neutralize primary isolates and across highly diverse clades of viruses to which the patient has not been exposed. However, such antibodies may take 1 to 2 years to develop in infected individuals.^{57,58} Although antibodies that bind Env can be detected in the plasma within weeks of HIV infection,⁵⁹ these early antibodies are largely nonneutralizing and do not protect against superinfection.^{60,61} Relatively high levels of antibodies that have neutralizing potential appear several weeks later, although their breadth is limited and their ability to eliminate the circulating virus is inadequate^{49,62} (see Fig. 121.2). This is at least partly the result of the selective pressure exerted by the antibody response that drives HIV genetic variants to arise rapidly. It is thought that these diverse circulating envelope sequences may represent a constantly evolving target that contributes to the ability of HIV to evade the humoral immune response. As Env changes, the humoral immune response coevolves with regard to shifting specificities, mode of recognition, and affinity maturation (Fig. 121.3). The end result in some patients is the development of antibodies capable of neutralizing highly diverse isolates by targeting accessible conserved epitopes.

Over the past decade, study of the sera and cells from such patients has resulted in extraordinary advances in our understanding of the nature of a broadly neutralizing antibody (bNAb) response. These advances have been largely driven by the formation of well-defined cohorts of patients with broad neutralizing sera^{63–68}, Env-specific peripheral blood B-cell isolation through microculture or fluorescent probe sorting, and isolation of Ig genes and reexpression as monoclonal antibodies.^{69,70} These developments led to an explosion in the number of HIV-specific monoclonal antibodies isolated, resulting in a deconvolution of the specificities responsible for the activity of broadly neutralizing sera, and an understanding of the structure, function, and evolution of these antibodies. The targets of these bNAbs fall into five major groups: the CD4-binding site, a second variable loop (V2) glycan at the trimer apex, a site at the base of V3 centered on the Asn332-glycan on gp120, the membrane-proximal external region on gp41, and epitopes that bridge the interface between gp120 and gp41 (Fig. 121.4).⁴⁷ Many of these antibodies are atypical compared with monoclonal antibodies for other viruses. They may have very high levels of somatic hypermutation; often have insertions and deletions, long heavy-chain complementarity-determining 3 regions, or restricted germline use; or may be polyreactive. In some cases patients who ultimately developed broadly neutralizing sera had participated in longitudinal study protocols involving frequent sampling of serum and peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMCs) since acute infection.^{71–73} Use of these samples combined with next-generation sequencing has permitted detailed studies of how bNAbs arise in some individuals. At present the challenge for the field is how to best use this information to develop immunotherapies or passive or active prophylaxis.

Experiments using passive administration of bNAbs in animals have provided an important proof of concept that they have potent

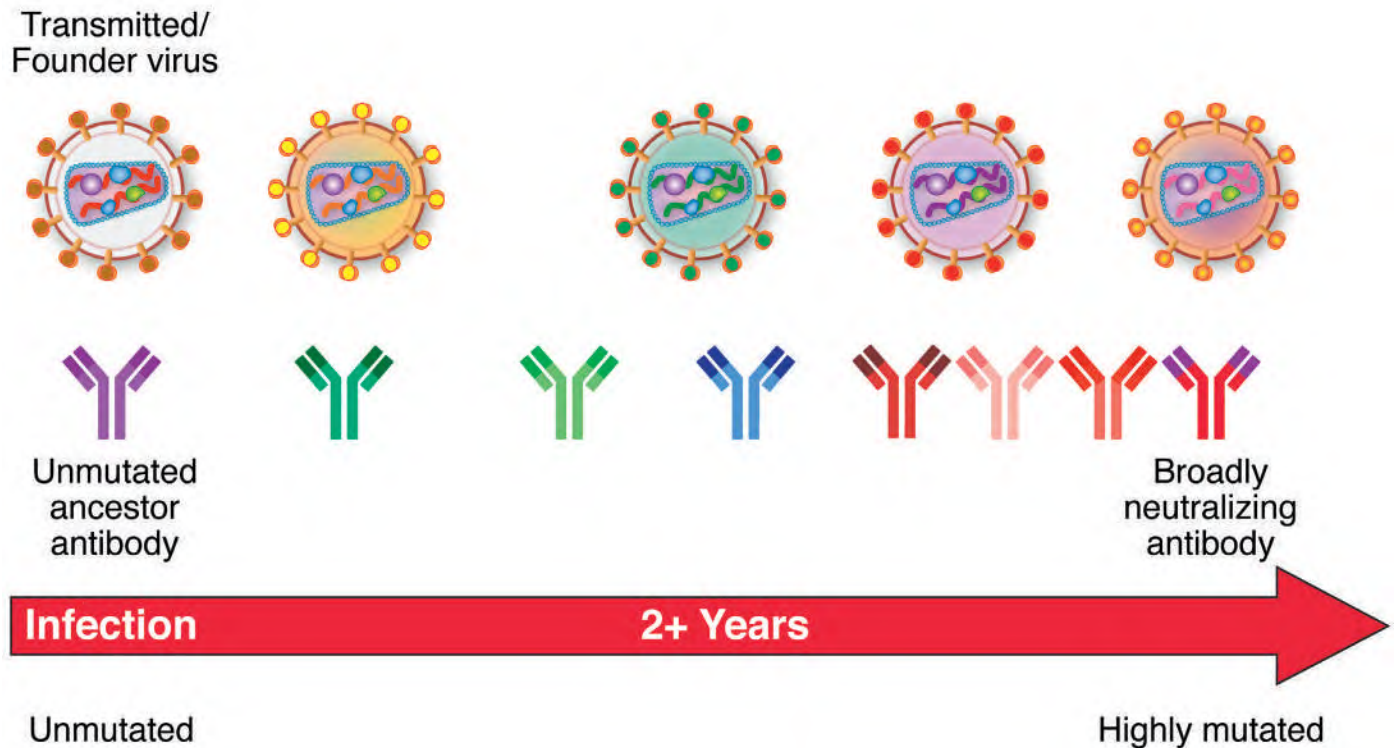


FIG. 121.3 Coevolution of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the antibody response. In response to HIV infection, the antibodies expressed by naïve B cells that bind the HIV envelope undergo somatic hypermutation and increase their affinity. This selects for viral variants that are not recognized. In response, new antibody specificities may then be expanded or existing specificities may further mutate. This process continues over 1 to 2 years, ultimately resulting in the generation of broadly neutralizing antibodies in some patients.

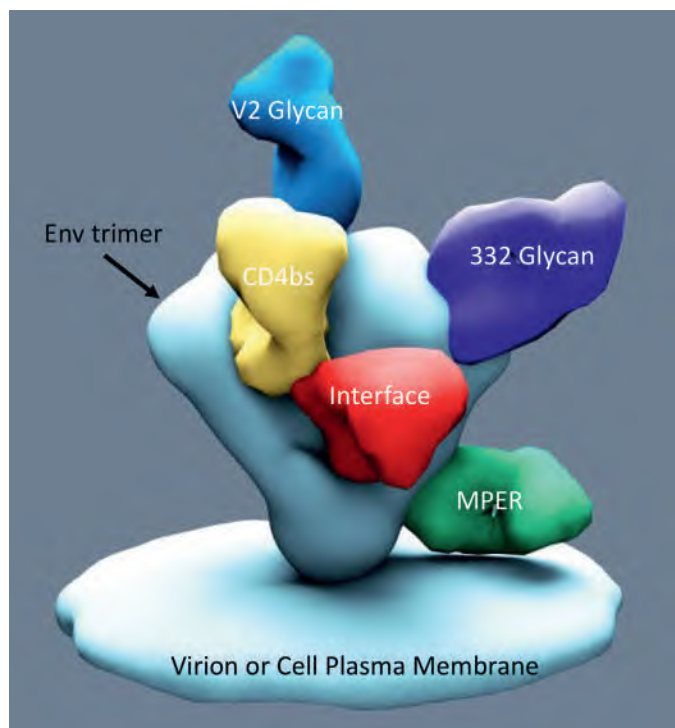


FIG. 121.4 Conserved sites of vulnerability on human immunodeficiency virus envelope glycoprotein. The figure depicts the binding of examples of broadly neutralizing antibodies, here labeled with their respective binding sites. *bs*, Binding site; *MPER*, membrane proximal external region. (Image courtesy A. Ward; with permission.)

immunotherapeutic effects. BNABs can dramatically lower viremia in chimeric simian-human immunodeficiency virus (SHIV)-infected rhesus macaques or HIV-infected humanized mice. Although mutational escape is commonly observed during monotherapy, it is less often observed during administration of antibody combinations. In addition, passive antibody administration to macaques during acute or chronic infection with some SHIVs has resulted in sustained suppression of viremia after the antibody is cleared, suggesting that passive antibodies have the potential to modulate the T-cell response.^{74,75} The potential role of neutralizing antibodies as immunotherapies, alone or in combinations with antiretrovirals, should become clearer after completion of several clinical trials using these strategies that are underway in humans.

There is also a large body of data that suggest that antibodies can likely provide complete protection from HIV infection. Numerous bNABs have been shown to provide sterilizing immunity against mucosal challenges in SHIV-rhesus macaque challenge models.⁴⁷ The levels required to protect these animals are well within the range of titers detected in many HIV-infected patients, suggesting that they are likely achievable in uninfected vaccinees. Although stimulating bNABs through vaccination is a desirable goal, generating such a response has proven extremely challenging. Thus far, most vaccines in humans or experimental animals have generated antibody responses capable of neutralizing only very easy to neutralize viruses or responses specific to only the immunizing strain. As noted earlier, these antibodies take months to years to develop and are in many ways atypical. However, it is not completely clear whether prolonged development and high levels of somatic hypermutation are requirements for generation of these antibodies or simply reflect chronic replication and mutation in an immunocompromised host. Nonetheless, immunization strategies that might recapitulate the pathways to the generation of bNABs are currently the subject of intense interest. These strategies include immunogens designed to better engage naïve B cells, partial Env deglycosylation, or immunogens

derived from the study of Env and bNAb ontogeny to be used in progressive vaccination with sequential immunogens, to initiate and then broaden the antibody response. Although the induction of a bNAb response is an extremely difficult goal to achieve, weakly or nonneutralizing antibodies can provide some, albeit more modest, level of protection, as reviewed by Excler and colleagues.⁷⁶ In addition, considerable optimism has been generated by a vaccine trial in humans demonstrating 31% overall efficacy in preventing infection in participants, primarily those at heterosexual risk of HIV infection in Thailand.⁷⁷ Participants were vaccinated with a combination of an attenuated poxvirus encoding HIV gene products, followed by an HIV envelope protein boost. Although the precise mechanism of action remains incompletely understood, the vaccine did not induce neutralizing antibodies against circulating strains, and protection from infection may have operated through an antibody-mediated cellular cytotoxicity mechanism. The role of such responses may become more apparent after the completion of several protocols that build on this strategy. In addition to these studies, efforts are underway to use antibodies in passive prophylaxis.⁷⁸ These approaches include vectored prophylaxis, by means of delivery of DNA or mRNA encoding bNAbs, or passive antibody therapy by means of intravenous or intramuscular injection. In some cases bNAbs have been engineered to include multiple specificities in a single antibody or to dramatically extend half-life.^{79–81} A large multinational prophylaxis trial of passive administration of the bNAb VRC01 is currently in progress. It appears likely that the aforementioned passive prophylactic or immunotherapeutic clinical trials will provide considerable insights regarding potential selection of resistant isolates, and the levels of antibodies necessary for control of, or protection against, HIV infection.

Cellular Immune Responses Cytotoxic T Lymphocytes

Major histocompatibility complex (MHC) class I–restricted, HIV-specific, CD8⁺ T-lymphocyte responses are found in the peripheral blood within the first few months of HIV infection and are detected during the chronic phases of infection in most HIV-infected individuals.⁸² During the chronic phase of infection, CD8⁺ T cells specific for each of the known HIV-1 gene products are found in the peripheral blood with bulk cytotoxicity assays, limiting dilution assays for cytolysis, and interferon- γ (IFN- γ) secretion.⁸³ Several lines of evidence suggest that HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells play an important role in restriction of virus replication. First, the temporal association of the peak of the virus-specific cytotoxic response with the decline of viremia during acute HIV infection of humans or SIV infection of macaques is thought to represent the effect of virus-specific CD8⁺ T cells in restricting retroviral replication in humans.^{82,84,85} Second, indirect evidence of an important role of CD8⁺ T cells in restriction of HIV replication in humans comes from strong associations between restriction of virus replication and certain MHC class I alleles and functional links with epitopes presented by these alleles.^{86–90} Third, CD8⁺ T-cell depletion by exogenous monoclonal antibodies has been shown to abrogate restriction of virus replication in SHIV-infected and SIV-infected monkeys.^{91–94} Last, the HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells of patients that control HIV replication for many years have been shown to be functionally superior to those without immunologic control of virus replication (see “Long-Term Nonprogressors/Elite Controllers”).⁸³ Based on the aforementioned evidence, it is now generally accepted that CD8⁺ T cells are an important component of immune system–mediated restriction of HIV replication. However, although HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells likely exert some level of control over HIV replication, this restriction is generally incomplete, because viral RNA levels reach 10³ to 10⁶ copies/mL plasma in the vast majority of HIV-infected individuals during the chronic phase of infection in the absence of ART.

Several viral factors unique to HIV likely contribute to the ability of HIV to evade the cellular immune response. Mutations produced during the reverse transcription process, combined with high levels of replication over a prolonged period, result in a highly diverse population of viruses that circulate in a given patient. It is thought that this extraordinary level of viral diversity results from the development of mutant viruses that escape immune recognition. Selection of “escape” mutations has been documented in HIV-infected humans and

SIV-infected macaques. Longitudinal studies of viral sequences and CD8⁺ T-cell responses to known motifs have shown the appearance of mutations that no longer bind to the MHC class I molecule.⁹⁵ However, it should be noted that the interplay of host and viral factors is extraordinarily complex, given the large number of viral epitopes targeted by the immune response, the timing of gene expression during the viral replication cycle, and the complement of MHC class I alleles. The host CD8⁺ T-cell response is limited by the ability of the MHC class I alleles to bind to various viral epitopes, and viral replication is limited by the degree to which an escape mutation impairs viral replicative capacity, or “fitness.” In addition, the CD8⁺ T-cell response to each of the proteins within the autologous virus is very high in frequency and very broad.^{96,97} Escape mutations may be found within a single epitope, but it is likely that other conserved epitopes within the same gene remain as targets.⁹⁶ Strong associations between escape mutations, or viral fitness, and virus load have not been found.^{98,99} Finally, putative escape mutations are also found in viral sequences in the plasma of LTNP/ECs at the same frequency as MHC-matched progressors.^{96,97} Taken together, these data suggest that although escape mutations clearly can occur, they do not appear to be the critical driving force in the loss of immunologic control in the vast majority of HIV-infected patients.

In addition to the high levels of diversity generated during HIV infection, other viral factors may contribute to the poor ability of the immune system to control HIV replication. HIV Nef, Tat, and Vpu are each capable of downmodulating surface expression of MHC class I molecules necessary for the recognition of infected cells, as reviewed by Wonderlich and coworkers.¹⁰⁰ The effect of Nef is to diminish cell surface expression of human leukocyte antigen-A (HLA-A) and HLA-B molecules, leaving HLA-C and HLA-E unaffected.¹⁰¹ It has been proposed that these effects may permit infected cells to avoid lysis by HLA-A– or HLA-B–restricted T cells, which dominate the cellular immune response, yet also avoid lysis by NK cells, which are inhibited by the presence of HLA-C or HLA-E. However, there is not uniform agreement that this is a predominant mechanism by which HIV avoids immunologic control. LTNP/ECs (see later), who can maintain immunologic control for many years, typically have intact MHC and HIV *nef* sequences.^{89,102} Several investigators have demonstrated the ability of autologous HIV-infected cells to stimulate cytokine secretion or cytolysis by class I–restricted HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells. In addition, the high frequencies of HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells found in the peripheral blood of most HIV-infected patients rapidly fall to very low levels after initiation of ART.¹⁰³ This indicates that in the absence of therapy, HIV-infected cells stimulate and maintain high frequencies of HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells. Although infected cells are recognized, viral replication is not fully suppressed. At present, the relative role of MHC downregulation in the loss of restriction of HIV replication remains unclear.

Another parameter of the CD8⁺ T-cell response that may provide enhanced restriction of virus replication is the breadth or number of HIV peptides to which a patient may respond. However, when the total CD8⁺ T-cell response was measured during acute or chronic infection, no relationship was found between the breadth of the response and levels of plasma HIV viremia.^{97,104,105} Several reports have described a narrowly focused CD8⁺ T-cell response in LTNP/ECs or in individuals treated with ART during acute infection and who have restricted virus replication.^{89,106,107} Because HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells of most chronically infected patients persist at high frequencies and respond to a broad array of HIV peptides, it does not appear likely that inadequate breadth of the response is a major contributor to poor restriction of virus replication during chronic infection.

Several lines of evidence have suggested that the inability of CD8⁺ T cells to control HIV may lie not in the quantity of these cells but rather in the qualitative properties of the response. Some data have suggested that disrupted HIV-specific CD8⁺ T-cell function in progressors is associated with increased expression of programmed death (PD)–1 molecules¹⁰⁸ or decreased CD127 (interleukin [IL]–7R α chain)^{109,110} expression, but other studies have noted that these parameters are restored during ART, suggesting that they may be a consequence rather than a cause of the loss of control of viral replication.^{111,112} The HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells of LTNP/ECs maintain greater frequencies of “polyfunctional” cells, named for their ability to degranulate and produce several

cytokines, including IL-2.¹¹³ HIV-infected LTNP/ECs have also been differentiated by increased proliferative capacity of HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells linked to enhanced expression of perforin.¹¹⁴ These functions have been found to be necessary for the killing of autologous HIV-infected CD4⁺ T cells.¹¹⁵ It is thought that the relative absence of these functions in progressors may represent a mechanism whereby HIV avoids immunologic control.^{115,116}

Recent studies in the SIV/SHIV Rhesus macaque infection model have provided further evidence that the CD8⁺ T-cell response may be used to suppress, or even cure lentiviral infection.^{94,117} In a series of studies, rhesus macaques were immunized with a rhesus cytomegalovirus (CMV) recombinant vaccine encoding HIV gene products that are targets of the cellular immune response. The vaccine caused a chronic CMV infection that induced a persistent SIV-specific CD8⁺ T-cell response. In those animals that were infected, a profound level of suppression of the pathogenic SIV challenge virus was observed. In 50% of infected animals, the pathogenic challenge virus was reduced below detection threshold levels and thought to have been cleared.¹¹⁷ Interesting to note, the data suggest that nonclassical MHC class II- and MHC class I-E-restricted CD8⁺ T-cell responses broadly targeting an average of 35 epitopes mediate this control.^{118,119} In a more recent study, macaques treated with potent and broadly neutralizing anti-HIV-1 antibodies during acute SHIV infection unexpectedly facilitated emergence of CD8⁺ T-cell immunity able to durably suppress virus replication.⁷⁴ Thus, in addition to an envelope-specific humoral immune response to an HIV vaccine, the CD8⁺ T-cell response may provide an important second line of defense against breakthrough infections that might lead to long-term control of the virus. Although highly speculative, based on the results in the rhesus macaque model, it is theoretically possible that the CD8⁺ T-cell response to vaccination might result in virus clearance in some instances.

Soluble CD8⁺ T-Cell-Secreted Factors

In addition to cytotoxicity, other mechanisms of CD8⁺ T-cell-mediated antiviral activities have been described. CD8⁺ T cells of HIV-infected patients secrete soluble factors that can inhibit viral replication in the absence of cell killing. This noncytolytic antiviral activity was initially discovered *in vitro* after use of CD8⁺ T cells from HIV-infected patients.¹²⁰ Years later, the suppressive activity against R5 viruses was shown to be mediated in large part by the CC chemokines MIP-1 α , MIP-1 β , and RANTES.¹⁴ These molecules are natural ligands for CCR5, a coreceptor for R5 strains of HIV-1, and inhibit viral replication primarily by blocking virus entry. In addition to the CC chemokines, poorly characterized soluble factor(s) act after viral entry to suppress HIV transcription in infected cells. These factor(s) have been termed *CD8⁺ T-cell antiviral factors* (CAF).¹²¹ Although not required for this suppressive activity, maximal suppression of HIV replication is observed under conditions wherein cell contact is maintained and cells are HLA matched.^{122,123} This suppressive activity has been shown to be greater in PBMCs of HIV-infected patients than in uninfected control subjects. A novel anti-HIV chemokine produced by activated CD8⁺ T cells, XCL1/lymphotactin, has been shown to inhibit a broad spectrum of HIV-1 isolates, irrespective of their coreceptor-usage phenotype.¹²⁴ At present, it remains incompletely understood whether suppressive factors are secreted in an antigen-specific manner.

CD4⁺ T-Cell Responses

It has been demonstrated in several animal models of viral pathogenesis that virus-specific CD4⁺ T cells are critical for the induction or maintenance of an effective CD8⁺ T-cell response that mediates restriction of virus replication. Many viral infections of humans or experimental animals typically result in induction of CD4⁺ T-cell responses that can be demonstrated by proliferation to virus antigens *in vitro* long after elimination or control of infection, which is a reflection of the persistence of these virus-specific memory CD4⁺ T cells. Unlike most other infections of humans, HIV infection is characterized by the absence or extremely low level of HIV-specific CD4⁺ T-cell proliferative responses in the vast majority of untreated patients. Of note, CD4⁺ T cells from untreated HIV-infected individuals also have defective proliferative responses to non-HIV antigens.¹²⁵ In this regard, strong HIV-specific CD4⁺ T-cell

responses are found in relatively rare LTNP/ECs who restrict HIV replication in the absence of ART.^{126–128} In addition, proliferative responses to HIV antigens have been found in patients who were treated early during acute infection and who then had restricted HIV replication when ART was withdrawn.¹²⁸ Because HIV infects CD4⁺ T cells, it was believed that the early loss of HIV-specific proliferative responses may be the result of infection and deletion of HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells in the lymphoid tissues on encountering the virus.¹²⁹ However, several lines of evidence indicate that HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells persist in patients with progressive disease. Many reports have documented the persistence of HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells in most patients by intracellular cytokine staining after stimulation with HIV antigens.^{130–132} HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells also persist at the expected frequency and with the expected phenotype and functions in progressors when compared with responses to other viral antigens.¹³³ IL-2 production and proliferation of HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells was abrogated during an interruption of antiviral therapy, but restored in patients receiving ART, suggesting that diminished proliferation of these cells may be partly a result of the presence of high levels of HIV antigen. This effect is similar to that observed during viremia with other human viruses. Thus there is now general agreement that HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells persist at the expected frequencies during the chronic phase of infection in patients with progressive disease, although there is some controversy over whether disruptions of function persist. In addition, the role of depletion or disruption of the functions of HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells during acute infection or end-stage disease remains to be defined.

Host Genetic Factors

Among the most reproducible and powerful host factors to affect HIV disease is the impact of HLA alleles on viral load and disease progression. Since its initial description, the association between HLA-B*57/58 and B*27 with slower disease progression and B*35 with more rapid disease progression has been repeatedly observed, including in four genome-wide association studies.⁹⁵ Associations between these “protective alleles” and reduced viral load is not simply due to their enrichment in LTNP/ECs, but has been observed even in progressor cohorts.¹³⁴ Having a protective allele is neither necessary nor sufficient for immunologic control of HIV, given that approximately 20% of LTNP/ECs lack such alleles and they are found in progressors at the same frequency as in the general population.¹⁰⁷ In addition, an association has been observed between reduced viral load and a micropolymorphism in HLA-C,^{135,136} and an association with reduced viral load has been made in patients who carry a subset of B alleles and a killer inhibitory receptor.¹³⁷ Unlike other protective alleles, this combination is believed to function through the action of NK cells expressing the 3DL1 inhibitory receptor. Although the mechanisms of each of these HLA effects remain incompletely understood, important clues continue to come from *in vitro* studies of CD8⁺ T-cell and NK-cell function.

As noted earlier (see “HIV Entry and Dissemination”), the chemokine receptor genotype has an impact on rates of progression of disease. For example, individuals who carry one copy of the mutant CCR5- Δ 32 allele have an increased chance of experiencing a slow rate of disease progression compared with individuals who are homozygous for wild-type alleles.¹³⁸ In addition, some CCR2 alleles have been associated with slower rates of disease progression. Despite the association between CCR5 genotype and slower progression of HIV disease, this factor does not appear to be a dominant influence in the determination of the state of long-term nonprogression; neither CCR5- Δ 32 nor CCR2 alleles have been found to be enriched in LTNP/ECs who control HIV replication.^{89,102}

Long-Term Nonprogressors/Elite Controllers

Important clues regarding mechanisms underlying a successful immune response to HIV-1 have come from the study of rare examples of naturally occurring immunologic control of HIV replication. Although rates of disease progression vary widely among HIV-infected individuals, the median time between infection and development of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is approximately 10 years. It has become clear that a small percentage of untreated HIV-infected individuals show no evidence of disease progression, despite prolonged infection.^{139,140}

In addition to LTNP/ECs, other individuals who remain HIV seronegative, despite multiple exposures to HIV, have been identified, suggesting that elements of protection exist but may not be readily detected with standard measures of the immune response. This group is likely heterogeneous with regard to the mechanisms of resistance to HIV infection, as reviewed by Lederman and coworkers.¹⁴¹ Studies of LTNP/ECs and highly exposed seronegative patients have advanced our understanding of the pathogenesis of HIV disease and have increased optimism that some forms of immunologic protection from infection or control of viral replication may be harnessed in prophylactic or therapeutic vaccines.

Definitions of LTNP/ECs have varied.¹⁴² One early definition that was commonly used included documented HIV infection for more than 7 years, CD4⁺ T-cell count higher than 500 cells/μL without significant decline over time, no symptoms of HIV disease, and no history of ART. Because definitions of nonprogressors were created empirically, it is not surprising that these individuals constitute a heterogeneous group. Many who were originally defined by these clinical criteria have now gone on to develop progressive disease. However, there remains a small subgroup of untreated nonprogressors who have now been infected for 20 years and maintain normal CD4⁺ T-cell counts and plasma viral RNA levels less than 50 copies/mL of plasma. Mechanisms that may determine a course for LTNP/ECs during HIV infection include host genetic factors, effective immunologic control of virus replication, and/or infection with an attenuated strain of HIV (Table 121.1). Although patients with normal CD4⁺ T-cell counts and low levels of plasma virus are a heterogeneous group, a small subset of patients with truly nonprogressive HIV infection and control of virus replication in the absence of ART are likely to hold important clues to the basis of an effective immune response to HIV.

Host Immune Response Factors

A considerable amount of evidence now suggests that HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells play a major role in the maintenance of low viral load in most LTNP/ECs. First, the HLA-B*57 allele is found in approximately 65% of patients in several different cohorts.¹⁴² In addition, the HIV-specific CD8⁺ T-cell response in these patients is highly focused on B57-restricted peptides, suggesting that the B57 molecule likely plays a direct role in restriction of virus replication in these individuals.^{87,89} There are reports documenting viruses sufficiently pathogenic to cause progression to be transmitted to a second patient, who then becomes an LTNP/EC. In this case, both individuals carried the B*5703 allele.¹⁴³ Thus the recipient was able to mediate immunologic control despite B*57-associated escape mutations in the virus. In addition, there are cases of virus strains that cause progression in one partner being transmitted by superinfection to a nonprogressor, and that virus being controlled.^{144,145} In addition, “elite controller” rhesus macaques have been described that are enriched for the Mamu B*08 and B*17 alleles.^{146,147}

TABLE 121.1 Possible Mechanisms of Long-Term Nonprogression/Elite Control With HIV Infection

Host Genetic Factors

HLA type
Heterozygosity for 32-bp deletion in chemokine receptor CCR5
Mannose-binding lectin alleles
Tumor necrosis factor c2 microsatellite alleles
Gc vitamin D-binding factor alleles

Host Immune Response Factors

Effective CTL responses: “polyfunctionality,” proliferation, perforin production, cytotoxicity
Secretion of CD8 antiviral factor
Secretion of chemokines that block HIV entry coreceptors CCR5 (e.g., MIP-1α, MIP-1β, and RANTES) and CXCR4 (e.g., SDF-1)
Maintenance of functional lymphoid tissue architecture

Virologic Factors

Infection with attenuated strains of HIV

CTL, Cytotoxic T lymphocyte; HLA, human leukocyte antigen; MIP, macrophage inflammatory protein; RANTES, regulated on activation, normal T-cell expressed and secreted; SDF, stromal cell-derived factor.

In some cases, epitopes restricted by these alleles have motifs similar to those that bind HLA-B27 or HLA-B57 in humans. Furthermore, transient CD8⁺ T-cell depletion of SIV-infected elite controller macaques resulted in a dramatic increase in viral replication.⁹¹ Taken together, these data argue strongly that immunologic control in most LTNP/ECs is not a consequence of infection with attenuated viruses but rather is mediated by HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells.

The most recent data regarding immunologic control in LTNP/ECs suggest that the superior ability of these patients to control HIV compared with progressors is mediated not by the quantity of HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells but rather by their qualitative function.⁸³ A number of studies using quantitative techniques that examined the response to a broad array of HIV gene products have not found higher frequencies or breadth of HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells in LTNP/ECs compared with progressors. The HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells of LTNP/ECs maintain greater frequencies of polyfunctional cells, named for their ability to degranulate and produce several cytokines, including IL-2.^{112,113} However, these cells make up an extremely small subset of the total HIV-specific CD8⁺ T-cell response, and many LTNP/ECs demonstrate few or no such cells.

By far, the property that most clearly distinguishes the HIV-specific immune response of LTNP/ECs from other patients is the ability to suppress HIV replication and/or kill HIV-infected cells in vitro. For some time, it had been known that HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells of LTNP/ECs maintain greater proliferative capacity and ability to upregulate perforin on stimulation compared with progressors.¹¹⁴ More recently, the CD8⁺ T cells of LTNP/ECs were shown to have a greater capacity to restrict HIV replication in vitro.^{116,148,149} In addition, increases in perforin and granzyme B production were shown to result in a dramatically increased ability of CD8⁺ T cells of LTNP/ECs to kill autologous HIV-infected CD4⁺ T cells compared with progressors.^{112,115} Although causality must ultimately be demonstrated, the abilities to proliferate, produce perforin, and kill HIV-infected CD4⁺ T cells appear to be qualities within the HIV-specific CD8⁺ T-cell response that are clearly associated with immunologic control in LTNP/ECs.

The relationship between humoral immune responses to HIV and disease progression remains incompletely understood. LTNP/ECs, as a group, do not have high levels of neutralizing antibodies.^{63,139,140,150} In many cases, they may have low levels of binding or neutralizing antibodies believed in part to be due to lower levels of antigen driving the humoral immune response. In studies that examined clinical parameters that might be associated with bNAbs, the only correlation found was a positive correlation with viral load.^{63,64} Some studies have demonstrated that sera that can neutralize a broad panel of primary isolates can be found in patients that have relatively high CD4⁺ T-cell counts, but are viremic.^{63–68} Although such patients tend to have slow rates of disease progression, they are a heterogeneous group. In these patients, antibodies may not be causing slower disease progression, but rather the association may be a consequence of the need for both an intact immune system and the presence of viral antigen to have such a response. At present, it does not appear likely in most cases that maintenance of neutralizing antibodies plays a major role in determining the state of nonprogression.

Virologic Factors

Infection with attenuated strains of HIV may account for nonprogression in a small subset of individuals. The most extensively characterized association of attenuated viral strains and nonprogression is that of an Australian cohort of nonprogressors who were infected by transfusion from a single nonprogressor donor.¹⁵¹ Viruses from these individuals contained deletions in the *nef* gene and in the U3 region of the long terminal repeat (LTR). Other anecdotal reports have implicated other defective HIV genes with nonprogression, although such cases appear to be the exception rather than the rule.¹⁵² Many of the patients described in the original Australian cohort ultimately developed progressive disease.

RESERVOIRS OF HIV INFECTION

There is unequivocal evidence from multiple lines of investigation that HIV persists in almost all infected individuals receiving effective ART. The most powerful demonstration of the inability of ART to eradicate HIV infection comes from in vivo studies of individuals who began ART during the chronic stage of HIV infection, achieved and maintained

suppression of plasma HIV RNA for several years, and subsequently interrupted therapy. Interruption of ART resulted in a rapid rebound of plasma viremia in 95% of patients.¹⁵³ More recent studies have largely confirmed these findings, although there is evidence that a proportion of individuals who initiated ART early control their plasma viremia for variable periods of time after discontinuation of therapy.¹¹ Although the reasons for this difference are unclear, a delineation of factors involved, including origin of rebounding plasma HIV, effect of time to establish long-lived reservoirs, and role of the immune system, are currently being investigated. A number of studies have suggested that replication-competent virus persists in the CD4⁺ T-cell compartment in infected individuals receiving effective ART and that early establishment of HIV reservoirs in peripheral lymphoid tissues, including the GALT, are the main impediments to eradicating HIV.¹⁵⁴

It was demonstrated by using highly sensitive assays with a limit of detection of a single copy of HIV RNA per milliliter of plasma that persistent low levels of plasma viremia from an unknown origin remain in the vast majority of individuals with undetectable plasma HIV when standard assays are used.^{155,156} In addition to important HIV reservoir sites in the GALT and peripheral lymphoid tissues, putative reservoir sites include the reproductive tract, bone marrow, and central nervous system (CNS).^{156–158} In addition to the high HIV burden in CD4⁺ T cells, other cells that can potentially contribute to the viral reservoir include DCs and macrophages, in addition to microglial cells, specialized macrophages that reside in the CNS.^{157,158} Genetic variability has been

demonstrated in HIV isolated simultaneously from the plasma and several reservoir sites, including the reproductive tract and the CNS, indicating that there may be compartmentalization of HIV in different sites.¹⁵⁸ Such compartmentalization may provide a sanctuary for HIV that may be relatively impenetrable by antiretroviral drugs; however, it is unclear whether these sanctuary sites contribute significantly to the persistence of HIV in the presence of ART.

Latent Reservoirs of HIV

The pool of latently infected cells in the resting CD4⁺ T-cell compartment has been one of the most extensively studied persistent reservoirs to date and is considered to be a major impediment to HIV eradication.^{159–161} HIV may enter resting CD4⁺ T cells, at which point a varying degree of reverse transcription of the HIV genome may occur in these cells (Fig. 121.5).^{162,163} This period of preintegration latency may last hours to days; in the absence of an activation signal, unintegrated proviral DNA loses its capacity to initiate a productive infection. If these cells become activated, however, reverse transcription proceeds to completion, followed by nuclear translocation and integration of proviral DNA into cellular DNA.^{162,163} It has been clearly demonstrated that a pool of resting CD4⁺ T cells that carry replication-competent HIV persists in essentially all infected patients who were receiving ART and in whom plasma viremia was suppressed below levels of detectability.^{159–161} In addition, this HIV reservoir is established during the earliest stages of HIV infection. The initiation of ART as early as 10 days after infection with

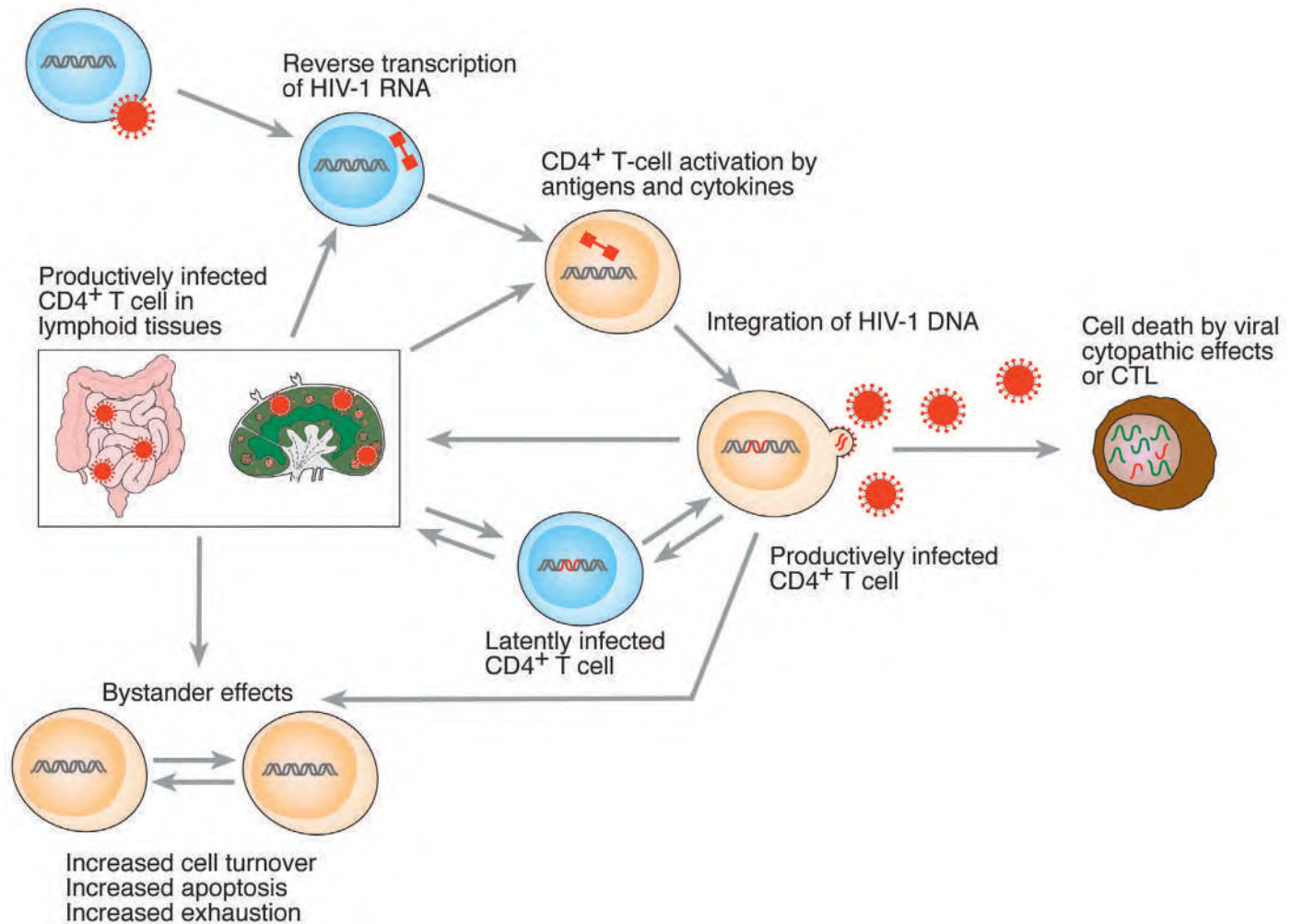


FIG. 121.5 Direct and indirect effects of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. HIV preferentially replicates in activated CD4⁺ T cells, although virus entry can occur before activation. Productive HIV replication proceeds as follows: entry into cell, reverse transcription of HIV RNA, integration into host genome, and formation of new virions. Consequences of productive HIV infection in CD4⁺ T cells include cell death by cytolysis and other mechanisms, spreading of virus to new targets, and establishment of long-lived latently infected reservoirs. The availability of high numbers of HIV target cells in lymphoid tissues leads to high levels of viral replication in most untreated individuals, and in turn leads to bystander effects that reflect chronic immune activation. CTL, Cytotoxic T lymphocyte.

HIV does not prevent the establishment of the resting CD4⁺ T-cell reservoir of HIV.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, several studies have shown that despite effective ART, HIV persists in the resting CD4⁺ T-cell reservoir for years,¹⁵⁴ including in the recently characterized stem cell memory T cells, which have been shown to be long-lived, quiescent, and relatively insensitive to HIV cytopathic effects.¹⁶⁵ It has been estimated that it would take decades of continuous ART, using the currently available drugs, to eradicate HIV, and these estimates assume 100% effectiveness of ART and that the CD4⁺ T-cell latent reservoir is the only viral reservoir present in infected individuals. These sobering data and the unlikelihood of certain of the assumptions have led many to conclude that the latent in addition to other viral reservoirs present major impediments to eradication of HIV.

Lymphoid Tissues

Secondary lymphoid tissues, especially those of lymph nodes and GALT, represent major sites of HIV replication early, after, and throughout all stages of infection. In the absence of ART, HIV infection is characterized by a dichotomy in viral load between peripheral blood and lymphoid tissue, in which the frequency of infected cells in lymphoid tissues far exceeds that in peripheral blood.¹⁵⁴ Early findings on tissue sections excised from axillary lymph nodes have demonstrated that up to 25% of CD4⁺ T cells present in the germinal centers (GCs) harbor HIV DNA.¹⁶⁶ More recent analyses performed on tissues isolated from GALT have demonstrated massive depletion of CD4⁺ T cells in the lamina propria within several weeks after infection.^{34,35} Depletion of CD4⁺ T cells in lymphoid tissues (and in peripheral blood owing to a direct link with lymphoid tissues) has also been shown to persist throughout all stages of HIV infection in untreated individuals.^{156,158} Collectively, these data emphasize the role of secondary lymphoid tissues as critical reservoirs for HIV *in vivo*.

The significant role of secondary lymphoid tissues in ongoing HIV replication during all stages of disease in the absence of ART suggests that these compartments may also play a significant role in the maintenance of viral reservoirs in the presence of ART. Initiation of ART leads to a rapid decrease in lymph node viral burden, and within 24 weeks the levels of HIV RNA in the GCs decrease significantly.¹⁶⁷ However, even with prolonged ART, it is almost universally possible to detect HIV RNA within B-cell follicles of lymph nodes, where follicular dendritic cells (FDCs) have been proposed as long-lived repositories for intact HIV virions. Similar to DCs, FDCs have been shown to retain infectious HIV within endosomal compartments that can recycle to the surface and transmit virus to target CD4⁺ T cells.¹⁶⁸ The GALT also harbor HIV that is not completely cleared with ART; levels of HIV DNA in CD4⁺ T cells remain severalfold higher in GALT compared with the peripheral blood in those whose levels of plasma HIV RNA had remained below the limit of detection for several years. There are also indications that macrophages in mucosal, adipose, and pulmonary tissues may be a long-lived source of infectious HIV, although most of these observations have been made in animal models and need further evaluation in humans.^{158,169} Finally, there is also evidence that virus in myeloid cells is acquired by phagocytosis of infected CD4⁺ T cells.¹⁷⁰

Strategies for HIV Eradication

Over the past several years, there has been a flurry of discussion regarding the possibility that HIV can be eradicated from HIV-infected individuals.^b Such a pursuit has accelerated with evidence that one such individual, commonly referred to as the “Berlin patient,” has been cured of HIV.²⁶ His case is unique and unlikely to be clinically applicable, given that the approach taken was to treat an underlying leukemia with chemotherapy and to perform a stem cell transplantation from a donor who was homozygous for the HIV resistance gene *CCR5-Δ32*. The post-transplantation therapy also included chronic immunosuppressive therapy for the prevention of transplant rejection. Despite numerous attempts since 2009, similar attempts to eradicate HIV involving bone marrow or stem cell transplantation or gene therapy have failed to replicate the outcome of the Berlin patient.^{9,11} Alternative cure strategies are also being pursued, including the use of agents that could reverse HIV latency

and/or use modalities involving gene therapy or molecules engineered for virus-specific killing.⁹ Finally, there are also discussions of using immune-based interventions as part of a combination of approaches to control HIV replication in infected individuals through the induction of an immune response that could prevent viral rebound in the absence of ART. In this case, the more appropriate term would be sustained ART-free virologic remission, whereby the virus, although still present in the body, would be kept in check by the individual's own immune system.^{9,154}

IMMUNE DYSFUNCTION CAUSED BY HIV INFECTION

A wide array of immune system deficits is associated with HIV infection. Abnormalities in the function of all limbs of the immune system, including T and B lymphocytes, antigen-presenting cells, and NK cells, have been described. Immunodeficiency may become so profound in the late stages of disease that HIV-specific antibody and cytolytic T-lymphocyte responses diminish in the face of high levels of ongoing viral replication.

Lymphoid Tissues

The dysfunctions induced by HIV can be best appreciated in the context of the microenvironment in which the virus replicates. Most CD4⁺ T cells, which comprise the main targets for HIV replication, reside in secondary lymphoid tissues, such as lymph nodes and GALT, in which immune responses are generated. Early studies conducted before the availability of effective ART demonstrated that the clinically asymptomatic phase of HIV infection is characterized by lymphoid hyperplasia, whereas advanced HIV infection is marked by a striking disruption and atrophy of lymphoid tissue architecture.¹⁷³ Follicular involution, hypervascularity, and fibrosis are some of the histopathologic changes evident in lymph nodes from patients with advanced HIV disease. FDCs are eliminated during disease progression and the resulting disturbances in follicular structure have important implications regarding the pathogenesis of HIV-related immunodeficiency. The ability to mount immune responses against new antigens and the ability to maintain memory responses are dependent on the maintenance of an intact follicular architecture, which is severely impaired when the FDC network is destroyed.¹⁶⁸ Fibroblastic reticular cells (FRCs), another constituent of lymph nodes that provide the structural backbone and framework for the generation and maintenance of immune responses, are also progressively affected by the lack of containment of HIV replication.¹⁶⁸

In studies on the effect of HIV infection on lymph node architecture, the inflammation caused by persistent viral replication contributes to lymphatic tissue damage and limits the potential for immunologic reconstitution after ART. Deposition of collagen occurs mainly in the paracortex region of lymph nodes, which is populated mainly by T cells, and as such is thought to be associated with the loss of total CD4⁺ T cells in general, and naïve CD4⁺ T cells in particular.¹⁷⁴ Early initiation of ART may help limit the HIV-related damage and enable normalization of CD4⁺ T-cell populations. A distinct subset of lymphoid tissue memory CD4⁺ T cells, called T follicular helper (Tfh) cells, are present in GCs and play a critical role in their formation and maintenance.¹⁷⁵ Tfh cells provide and receive survival and differentiation signals by interacting with cognate B cells during the GC reaction. In lymph nodes of chronically infected HIV-viremic individuals, there is an accumulation of Tfh cells in GCs, which has been correlated with hypergammaglobulinemia and frequencies of GC B cells.¹⁷⁶ However, it is unclear whether these Tfh cells can provide adequate help to GC B cells, given that antibody responses to HIV and other pathogens are impaired in HIV-infected individuals and that Tfh cells are major targets for active HIV replication.¹⁷⁷

In GALT, massive depletion of CD4⁺ memory T cells, especially Th17⁺ CD4⁺ T cells, appears to occur within weeks after infection. Although possible explanations for the profound level of destruction at mucosal surfaces were first reported within the controlled setting of SIV infection,^{32,33} findings of extensive depletion of CD4⁺ T cells in GALT during the acute phase of HIV infection had been reported before the SIV studies.³⁴ Later studies established that Th17 CD4⁺ T cells were preferentially lost in the GALT of HIV-infected individuals

^bReferences 9, 11, 155, 156, 169, 171, 172.

and after pathogenic SIV infection.¹⁷⁸ The consequences of massive depletion of CD4⁺ T cells in GALT on the course of HIV disease remain somewhat speculative and mainly based on animal models; however, it has been proposed that the depletion compounds immune activation, a hallmark of HIV disease (see Fig. 121.5), through the disruption of mucosal integrity and leakage of inflammatory products.³⁹ Despite these uncertainties, and as with studies on the effect of early ART on lymph node architecture, early treatment appears to help restore the intestinal CD4⁺ T-cell pool.¹⁷⁹

CD4⁺ T Cells

CD4⁺ T-cell dysfunction, both quantitative and qualitative, is a major hallmark of HIV disease. The opportunistic infections observed with advancing disease are primarily caused by defects in CD4⁺ T-cell number and function that result directly or indirectly from HIV infection, although debate remains regarding the pathogenic mechanisms of CD4⁺ T-cell depletion. Direct effects of HIV on CD4⁺ T-cell function include direct infection of these cells, with resultant cell death that leads to loss of absolute cell numbers. Indirect effects of HIV infection result in decreased CD4⁺ T-cell production and differentiation, altered activation and migration, dysregulation of effector functions, and other defects in T-cell helper function.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, there is evidence that differences in phenotypic and functional attributes of HIV-specific and opportunistic pathogen-specific CD4⁺ T cells contribute to HIV disease progression and susceptibility to opportunistic infections.¹⁸¹ For example, CD4⁺ T-cell responses against tuberculosis (TB) are lost earlier than those directed against CMV in HIV-infected individuals, in part because TB-specific CD4⁺ T cells tend to be more susceptible to HIV than their CMV-specific counterparts.¹⁸² These differences are also thought to help explain at least in part the progressive yet somewhat selective susceptibility of HIV-infected individuals to opportunistic pathogens.¹⁸³

T cells from HIV-infected individuals manifest various phenotypic and functional abnormalities that begin early after infection and worsen with disease progression.¹⁸³ Functionally, CD4⁺ T cells are assessed according to their capacity to expand and differentiate into subsets that produce characteristic cytokines and chemokines (Th1, Th2, and Th17), and/or characteristic function, as with Tfh cells that promote B-cell affinity maturation and T-regulatory cells (Tregs) that regulate effector responses. Defects in early HIV infection include depletion in the GALT of Th17 cells, which mainly secrete IL-17, IL-22, and IL-21 and are responsible for host responses against extracellular bacteria and fungi at mucosal sites.³⁹ Given the importance of Th17 responses in protection of fungal infections, loss of Th17 cells may explain the early and common manifestations of mucosal candidiasis in HIV infection.¹⁸⁴ Defects associated with chronic HIV disease and ongoing viral replication include decreases in response to and production of IL-2, particularly with IL-2 as part of a polyfunctional immune response; this latter defect is most clearly associated with poor outcome.¹⁸⁵ Although single IFN- γ -producing CD4⁺ T cells are not affected until late in disease, these cells have poor proliferative capacity compared with the polyfunctional populations and predominate throughout the chronic phase in most untreated individuals.

Functional attributes of a given T-cell population can generally be linked to a distinct phenotypic profile, although there is more plasticity among helper T cells than previously thought.^{185,186} A number of surface markers are typically used to define various stages of CD4⁺ T-cell differentiation, from naïve to central, effector, and terminally differentiated memory populations. Effector memory CD4⁺ T cells, which are primed for immediate effector response, including secretion of IFN- γ and cytotoxicity, are relatively short-lived and have a low capacity to self-renew.¹⁸⁷ Central memory CD4⁺ T cells, which are better preserved in HIV-infected individuals who spontaneously control viral replication than in those who do not, have a high expansion capacity and are relatively long-lived as a result of autocrine production of IL-2.¹⁸⁸ In addition, HIV disease progression has been associated with skewing toward more differentiated and senescent CD4⁺ T cells,¹⁸⁹ including loss of CD4⁺ T cells expressing CD28 (i.e., the major costimulatory receptor of the B7-CD28 family, which is needed for normal activation of T cells and expressed on central but not effector memory T cells).¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, there is an increase in the frequency of CD4⁺ T cells expressing high

levels of inhibitory members of the B7-CD28 family, namely PD-1, TIGIT, and CTLA-4, in HIV-infected individuals with persistent viremia.^{7,108,110,190} This phenomenon has been termed T-cell exhaustion, a dysfunctional manifestation of HIV persistence that includes impairment of cytokine production and proliferative potential. Such defects can be reversed *ex vivo* by blocking the immunoregulatory molecules, referred to as checkpoint inhibitors. Inhibition of immunologic checkpoints has been increasingly used to treat various cancers by removing the blocks to immune control of the neoplasm. However, the reversibility of exhaustion in chronic viral infections in humans remains unknown.⁸

A variety of additional mechanisms probably also contribute to the observed functional defects in T cells. Preferential infection by HIV of CD4⁺ memory T cells,¹⁹¹ and in particular HIV-specific CD4⁺ T cells,¹⁹² and those of the Th17 and Tfh lineages,¹⁸⁷ helps explain loss of an effective response against the virus itself and other pathogens. In this regard, disruptions and reductions in the CD4⁺ T-cell receptor (TCR) repertoire is observed with progressive HIV disease, and particularly in association with aging; these disruptions are not restricted to a particular subset of CD4⁺ T cells but are thought to help explain the impaired response to pathogens in individuals with advancing HIV disease and age.^{5,193} Likely mechanisms involved in these disruptions, which are more frequently encountered as people with HIV age and live longer, include thymic involution and shrinkage of the naïve T-cell pool, in addition to the loss of T-cell populations with self-renewal potential and the accumulation of those with exhausted and senescent properties.¹⁹⁴ Although early initiation of ART appears to stabilize and even improve the TCR repertoire, other promising modalities, such as cytokine-based therapies with IL-7, have shown potential; however, more studies are needed to address repertoire restoration.¹⁷⁹

Mechanisms of CD4⁺ T-Cell Depletion

Even though CD4⁺ T cells were shown more than 30 years ago to be the cells most deleteriously affected in HIV-infected individuals, there remains considerable debate regarding the relative contribution of various mechanisms for the depletion of CD4⁺ T cells during the course of HIV infection. As with many other areas of HIV immunopathogenesis, evaluations of patients who control viremia without treatment for prolonged periods of time, those who begin effective ART during acute or chronic phases of infection, and those who interrupt treatment have provided fundamental insights into the understanding of the potential contributions of increased destruction, decreased production, and redistribution as mechanisms for CD4⁺ T-cell depletion in HIV-infected individuals.

Increased Destruction

Direct infection. The observations that CD4⁺ T cells are the principal targets of HIV infection *in vivo*^{12,13} and that HIV infection of CD4⁺ T cells *in vitro* causes cytopathogenicity have led to a reasonable assumption that direct infection of CD4⁺ T cells *in vivo* results in their depletion (see Fig. 121.5). However, quantitative studies of the frequency of HIV-infected cells *in vivo* suggest that single-cell killing by direct infection with HIV may not be the predominant mechanism of CD4⁺ T-cell depletion. In this regard, the proportion of productively infected peripheral blood CD4⁺ T cells in HIV-infected individuals rarely exceeds 1 in 100, even in advanced disease.¹⁹⁵ Viral burden and levels of virus expression are far greater in lymphoid tissues, including GALT and lymph nodes, than in peripheral blood.^{34,35,166,173} Furthermore, qualitative analyses showing a higher susceptibility of certain CD4⁺ T-cell subsets, and in particular those that are HIV specific,¹⁹² has led to a reevaluation of the mechanisms of HIV pathogenesis. Tfh cells in lymph nodes,¹⁷⁷ and Th17 cells in mucosal tissues,³⁹ have been shown to be particularly more susceptible to HIV infection than other CD4⁺ T cells. Although these distinctions may not be enough to account solely for the progressive, albeit slow, loss of CD4⁺ T cells that occurs over the course of HIV disease, their critical role in immune responses and homeostasis certainly helps explain the incapacity of the immune system to contain HIV.

Death by apoptosis and pyroptosis. Apoptosis is the morphologic description of a form of programmed cell death critical to physiologic homeostasis in almost every organ system; pyroptosis is similar in form but is associated with inflammatory responses to microbes.^{196,197} Apoptosis

is mediated by a series of effectors (e.g., caspases) and regulators and proceeds by one of two major pathways: the extracellular pathway, triggered by the binding of a ligand to a death receptor; and the intracellular pathway, triggered by mitochondrial events after stress signals from within the cell.¹⁹⁷ Mechanisms of apoptosis associated with HIV infection include cytolysis of infected cells through activation of granzymes, death of infected cells by virus-induced cytopathogenicity, death of bystander cells from proapoptotic viral proteins released from infected cells, and death resulting from HIV-induced immune activation and proinflammatory cytokines such as TNF- α .¹⁹⁸ Pyroptosis is induced after abortive HIV infection of CD4⁺ T cells,¹⁹⁹ whereby the presence of HIV after cell-to-cell spread is sensed, inducing the formation of an inflammasome that ultimately triggers cell death via caspase-1 and release of the proinflammatory cytokine IL-1 β .¹⁹⁸

It has been suggested that aberrant intracellular signals transduced by HIV proteins, including gp120 and Tat, might prime CD4⁺ T cells for apoptosis. However, whereas this mode of depletion of CD4⁺ T cells by induction of apoptosis in HIV-infected cells has been shown in numerous *in vitro* models, the vast majority of cell death that occurs *in vivo* during the chronic phase of infection results from activation-induced and inflammation-induced bystander mechanisms associated with apoptosis and pyroptosis.^{197,198} The massive depletion of CD4⁺ T cells in GALT that occurs during acute SIV and HIV infection is likely to involve multiple mechanisms.²⁰⁰ Fas-mediated apoptosis is also the primary mechanism of apoptosis resulting from HIV-induced activation of CD4⁺ T cells, in addition to CD8⁺ T cells, B cells, and NK cells (see Fig. 121.5).^{201,202} Also, both Fas- and TNF-related apoptosis-inducing ligand (TRAIL)-mediated pathways of apoptosis have been linked to the induction of IFN-induced genes, a major mechanism of HIV-mediated immune dysregulation during the chronic phase of infection in viremic individuals that has been shown to affect all major lymphocyte populations.^{196,202,203} In addition to activation-induced cell death mediated by ligation of death receptors, there is also intrinsic apoptosis induced by activation that results in decreased expression of prosurvival members of the Bcl-2 family including Bcl-2 and Bcl-X_L. Both these prosurvival proteins are downregulated in activated CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T cells isolated from HIV-infected individuals.²⁰¹ Studies on the immunotherapeutic potential of cytokines such as IL-7 and IL-15 have suggested that part of their mechanism of action is to increase survival of T cells by increasing intrinsic levels of Bcl-2 and other prosurvival members of this family.²⁰⁴ However, the increased survival may also promote HIV persistence.²⁰⁵

Lymphocyte turnover. Mathematical models of lymphocyte turnover derived through analysis of immediate changes in circulating CD4⁺ T-cell counts in individuals, after the initiation of ART, have led to estimates that approximately 2×10^9 CD4⁺ T cells are destroyed and replenished daily.²⁰⁶ These seminal findings initially led to the suggestion that increased turnover, which is defined by increased proliferation and cell death, of CD4⁺ T cells results from homeostatic compensation caused by HIV-mediated killing of CD4⁺ T cells. However, later studies using a variety of techniques to measure lymphocyte proliferation, including Ki-67 antigen, 5-bromo-2'-deoxyuridine (BrdU), and ²H₂-glucose to evaluate the effects of HIV on cell turnover have revealed a more complicated view. Several investigators have demonstrated that the increase in cell turnover during ongoing viral replication not only affects CD4⁺ T cells but also is observed in cells that are not direct targets of HIV and SIV, namely CD8⁺ T cells, B cells, and NK cells.^{207–209} These observations led to the conclusion that increased cell turnover is mainly caused by HIV-induced immune activation and increased homeostatic proliferation in response to lymphopenia. Consistent with this view is the observation that CD4⁺ T-cell counts are maintained in natural SIV infections in which chronically high levels of virus replication occur in the absence of immune activation.²¹⁰ A similar analysis has been made for HIV-2, wherein CD4⁺ T-cell numbers are maintained and disease progression is slow compared with HIV-1, although levels of virus replication are also lower in HIV-2 infection.¹⁸⁰ One lingering question with regard to the view that increased cell turnover is driven by increased immune activation is how to explain why CD4⁺ T cells are gradually depleted while CD8⁺ T cells are maintained until late-stage disease. Although there is no clear answer to this conundrum, several

possibilities have been proposed, including a greater susceptibility of CD4⁺ than CD8⁺ T cells to the detrimental effects of immune activation and/or a lower regenerative capacity for CD4⁺ compared with CD8⁺ T cells. There are also indications that differences in homeostatic regulation between CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T-cell compartments may help explain why the CD4:CD8 ratio is skewed in HIV infection and does not always recover with ART.^{211–213}

Decreased Production

Decreased production of CD4⁺ T cells could occur as a result of reduced thymic output. Proposed mechanisms for reduced thymic output in HIV infection include disruption of the thymic microenvironment, direct HIV infection and depletion of CD4⁺ thymocytes, reduction in thymocyte proliferation, and destruction of thymocytes by apoptosis.¹⁹⁴ Douek and coworkers first demonstrated that recent thymic emigrants in HIV-infected individuals are significantly decreased as a consequence of HIV infection.²¹⁴ The percentage of circulating and lymph node naïve CD4⁺ T cells carrying signal-joint T-cell receptor excision circle (TREC) gene products, a marker of recent thymic emigration, was significantly reduced in HIV-infected individuals compared with age-matched control subjects. Initiation of effective ART resulted in a significant increase in signal-joint TRECs in CD4⁺CD45RO⁺CD27⁺ naïve T cells in the periphery; the latter finding suggested that the thymus remains functional in these individuals, who were past adolescence, and may contribute to immune reconstitution. Advances in approaches for measuring the various forms of TREC and new cell-surface markers for tracking thymic emigrants, including CD31, have been used to confirm decreased thymic output in HIV disease.²¹⁵ These findings are also supported by observations of increased thymic output after initiation of ART in HIV-infected individuals, especially in individuals who initiate therapy early after infection.⁵ An enhanced capacity for immune reconstitution when ART is initiated early after HIV infection may help explain the more rapid recovery of CD4⁺ T cells in these individuals.^{216,217}

The disruption of normal hematopoiesis may contribute to the depletion of CD4⁺ T cells during HIV infection. Although there is limited evidence for direct infection of CD34⁺ progenitor cells and a role for the bone marrow in HIV persistence, abnormalities in bone marrow architecture and stromal auxiliary cells are observed in HIV-infected individuals. Such defects may thus compromise the bone marrow's ability to serve as the primary source of lymphocyte precursors, a process that is worsened by the effects of aging.¹⁹³

Redistribution. Although the role of redistribution in the loss of CD4⁺ T cells is unclear and difficult to ascertain, data from both HIV and SIV infections indicate that there is significant trafficking of CD4⁺ T cells from the peripheral blood to lymphoid tissue in acute and chronic infection. The trafficking of lymphocytes is mediated, in part, through the expression of homing receptors, which guide cells from the peripheral blood into lymphoid tissues via extravasation that involves cross-linking of their ligands on endothelial venule cells. In this regard, several investigators have suggested that redistribution of CD4⁺ T cells back from lymphoid tissue to the peripheral blood contributes significantly to the increase in CD4⁺ T cells after the initiation of ART.²¹⁸

CD8⁺ T Cells

Dysregulation of CD8⁺ T-cell numbers and function is evident throughout the course of HIV disease. After acute primary infection, CD8⁺ T-cell counts usually rebound to supranormal levels and may remain elevated for prolonged periods. Increases in CD8⁺ T cells during all but the late stages of disease may partly reflect the effects of chronic immune activation that affect both CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T cells, albeit with distinct responses in terms of rates of proliferation, death, and regeneration. Although many explanations for the inverse ratio of CD4 to CD8 remain speculative, there is general agreement that the inversion is not simply a reflection of CD4⁺ T cells being direct targets for HIV.^{211–213} As with CD4⁺ T cells, CD8⁺ T cells of HIV-viremic individuals manifest an increased cell turnover and decreased levels of TREC. However, there are some indications that compared with CD4⁺ T cells, CD8⁺ T cells are less dependent on thymic function and an intact lymphoid tissue architecture for homeostasis and have a lower deficit to overcome after the acute phase of massive cell depletion in GALT.^{174,213} In addition, changes in

lymphoid tissue architecture that occur with progressive HIV disease, including increased fibrosis and loss of FRC networks, are thought to cause an increased relative proportion of CD8⁺ T cells in the circulation, thus accounting at least in part for the low CD4:CD8 ratio in the blood.²¹⁹

Furthermore, whereas both activation and death rates are increased for CD4⁺ T cells, there is likely a net increase in activation for CD8⁺ T cells that may be explained by differences in how CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T cells become activated in HIV-infected individuals.²²⁰ In this regard, the degree of T-cell activation, as measured by the expression of the activation marker CD38 on CD8⁺ but not on CD4⁺ T cells, remains one of the strongest predictors of time to HIV disease progression. Even in patients receiving ART, the level of activation on CD8⁺ T cells is inversely correlated to gains in CD4⁺ T-cell counts.²²¹

During HIV disease progression, CD8⁺ T cells also undergo alterations that reflect a skewing within the CD8⁺ T-cell compartment. Increased frequencies of CD8⁺ T cells with reduced expression of CD28 and increased expression of CD57 are observed in HIV disease, possibly reflecting expansion of immunosenescent cells that normally occurs in the elderly.¹⁹³ Data from numerous studies have suggested that impaired HIV-specific CD8⁺ T-cell activity in HIV-viremic individuals is at least in part associated with a skewed effector memory CD8⁺ T-cell population that displays low polyfunctionality, proliferative capacity, and effector function.^{220,222} Furthermore, HIV-induced T-cell exhaustion, which includes upregulation of the inhibitory receptors, including PD-1, LAG-3, TIGIT, and Tim-3, among others, has been described both for HIV-specific CD8⁺ T cells and in the general CD8⁺ T-cell population.²²³ Several transcriptional factors that control T-cell effector function and differentiation, including BATF,²²⁴ T-bet, and Eomes, are also modulated in exhausted CD8⁺ T cells and may control the extent of dysregulation,²²³ even after successful reduction of viremia by ART.²²⁵ Other CD8⁺ T-cell functions may be impaired during HIV disease progression, such as loss of noncytolytic, non-MHC-restricted CD8⁺ T-cell-derived HIV suppression.²²⁶

B Cells

Dysregulation of B cells and an intrinsic loss of function are likely responsible, in part, for the increase in certain bacterial infections seen in advanced HIV disease in adults, and for the morbidity and mortality associated with bacterial infections in HIV-infected children who cannot mount an adequate humoral response to common bacterial pathogens.¹⁸³ The number of circulating B cells is decreased in HIV-infected individuals; this likely reflects a combination of effects associated with HIV viremia, including the expansion of apoptosis-prone subsets and redistribution of cells into lymphoid tissues.²²⁷ One of the hallmarks of chronic HIV viremia is hypergammaglobulinemia,²²⁸ a consequence of generalized immune activation and the many inflammatory cytokines that favor terminal differentiation of B cells.²²⁹ The increase in immunoglobulins occurs for all classes and subclasses of antibody, although IgG1 is the most affected, and the increase is largely polyclonal.²³⁰ The association between hypergammaglobulinemia and ongoing HIV replication was first demonstrated in longitudinal studies in which initiation of ART led to the normalization of serum levels of both immunoglobulins and the corresponding antibody-secreting cells in the blood (plasmablasts or plasma cells).²³¹ In lymphoid tissues, as mentioned earlier (see “Immune Dysfunction Caused by HIV Infection”), more recent studies have shown strong correlations among HIV-induced hyperplasia, hypergammaglobulinemia, and frequencies of Tfh and GC B cells, the latter accounting for up to 50% of cells in biopsy specimens.²³² Chronic HIV plasma viremia has also been associated with the appearance of various subpopulations of B cells in the peripheral blood that express reduced levels of CD21, some of which are responsible for the increased secretion of immunoglobulins and the decreased response to B-cell stimuli, an abnormality that was first demonstrated in 1983.²²⁸ Several of these phenotypic and functional aberrations can be reversed by reduction of HIV plasma viremia by ART, suggesting that control of viremia may contribute to the restoration of the humoral arm of the immune system, especially when ART is initiated during primary infection.²³⁰

Several defects in B cells from HIV-infected individuals have been attributed to the expansion of subsets that are rare in the peripheral blood of healthy individuals.²³⁰ In addition to the plasmablasts, described

earlier, that are associated with hypergammaglobulinemia, there is also an expansion of immature transitional B cells and tissue-like memory B cells bearing features of exhaustion. The expansion of immature transitional B cells in the peripheral blood of HIV-infected individuals is associated with increased serum levels of IL-7 and CD4⁺ T-cell lymphopenia, with the strongest effects observed in advanced HIV disease and in individuals treated with exogenous IL-7.²³³ In contrast, the expansion of tissue-like memory B cells, defined by reduced expression of CD21 and CD27, the marker of classic B-cell memory, in the peripheral blood of HIV-infected individuals is associated with chronic HIV viremia.²³⁴ Tissue-like memory B cells show signs of HIV-associated exhaustion, manifesting with the following: increased expression of multiple inhibitory receptors and altered expression of homing receptors, similar to exhausted virus-specific T cells; decreased replication history and somatic hypermutation required for an effective antibody response; and decreased proliferative responses. Furthermore, the HIV-specific B-cell response is enriched within this exhausted B-cell compartment, indicating that B-cell exhaustion may contribute to the poor antibody response against HIV observed in HIV disease. Finally, correlates of B-cell dysfunction observed in HIV-infected viremic individuals also included an increased frequency of B-cell neoplasms, which is likely a reflection of transformation arising from increased HIV-induced B-cell turnover in the face of impaired T-cell immunoregulation.²³⁵

Classic memory B cells are defined by the expression of CD27 on B cells that are resting and long-lived. Of note, the decrease in the frequency of resting memory B cells in HIV-infected individuals occurs early after infection and is not reversed by ART, although there are some indications that early initiation of ART helps normalize the B-cell compartment.²³⁶ These observations likely explain, at least in part, the reduced memory B-cell responses that have been reported against various T-cell-dependent and T-cell-independent immunogens and against HIV itself. In this regard, several recently developed methods for probing, expanding, and isolating HIV-specific B cells have become available and are providing new insights into the antibody response against HIV. As discussed earlier (see “Humoral Immune Responses”) potent and bNAbs arise after several years of infection in a relatively small percentage of untreated individuals for reasons that remain unclear but likely involve sustained antigenic stimulation from persistent HIV replication. It is hoped that a better understanding of the HIV-specific antibody and B-cell responses in HIV-infected individuals will lead to better strategies for an effective antibody-based vaccine.

Natural Killer Cells

NK cells provide innate immune defense against virus-infected cells, certain tumor cells, and allogeneic cells. Activation of NK cells is governed by a balance of signals received from the triggering of cytotoxic activating and inhibitory receptors, the latter of which recognize MHC class I molecules and prevent cytotoxicity.²³⁷ NK cells can be divided into three subsets based on the expression of CD56; most NK cells in the peripheral blood of healthy individuals are composed of CD56^{dim} NK cells, compared with a minority that are CD56^{bright}. This latter subset tends to have a more regulatory function, secreting high levels of cytokines such as IFN- γ and TNF- α , whereas the former subset has a more cytotoxic function. The third subset, CD56^{neg} NK cells, are almost absent in healthy individuals, yet become overexpressed in HIV-infected individuals, especially those who experience chronic viremia.²³⁸ A reduction in the ability of NK cells to lyse target cells is observed throughout the course of HIV disease, and this defect increases with disease progression. Loss of function is associated with the increased frequency of CD56^{neg} NK cells. These functional defects are associated with increased frequencies of CD56^{neg} NK cells and are accompanied by alterations in expression of receptors that regulate NK-cell activity, namely the upregulation of certain inhibitory receptors and the downregulation of several activating receptors.²³⁹

There is little evidence that HIV productively infects NK cells *in vivo*; however, there is evidence that many HIV proteins, including envelope and accessory proteins, perturb NK cells through evasion properties that reduce the ability of NK cells to kill infected target cells.²³⁹ NK cells are also the primary mediators of the ADCC response, an antibody constant (Fc) region-mediated effector function that may be responsible for some of the nonneutralizing antibody-mediated protective effects

observed in the RV144 HIV vaccine trial.²⁴⁰ In HIV-infected individuals, there are indications that ADCC is involved in LTNP/EC control, although there is also evidence of HIV-mediated evasion.²³⁹ Several studies, reviewed by Carrington and coworkers,²⁴¹ have also found an association between genotype of certain NK cell–related HLA molecules and control of HIV viremia and disease progression, suggesting a role for NK cells in the control of HIV disease. In this regard, mutations in HIV accessory genes of chronically infected individuals likely have been shown to arise in response to pressure from killer-cell immunoglobulin-like receptors (KIR), providing additional evidence that HIV evolves to evade NK cell–mediated responses against the virus.²⁴²

Monocytes and Macrophages

Cells of the monocyte-macrophage lineage play key roles in the immunopathogenesis of HIV disease. These cells are likely involved in facilitating the transmission and establishment of HIV infection, as described earlier (see “Dissemination of HIV Infection”), although their role in maintaining the viral reservoir in ART-treated individuals is less certain.²⁴³ Dysfunction of these cells also occurs in HIV-infected individuals, especially with regard to impaired host defense against intracellular pathogens and their contribution to the immune-activating effects associated with ongoing HIV replication (see “Role of Immune Activation in the Pathogenesis of HIV Infection”).²⁴⁴

Monocytic cells express CD4 and numerous HIV coreceptors on their surface, including CCR5 and CXCR4, and can theoretically serve as targets of HIV infection for both R5- and X4-tropic strains. However, unlike infection of CD4⁺ T cells, HIV coreceptor usage is more restricted to CCR5 in the monocyte-macrophage lineage.²⁴³ Differences in receptor-binding affinities and mechanisms of cell-cell spread and host factors likely explain the more restricted replication of HIV in this lineage despite the expression of appropriate HIV receptors.^{243,244} Whereas circulating monocytes are rarely found to be infected unless differentiated into macrophages *ex vivo*, the presence of HIV *in vivo* can be detected in tissue macrophages, including resident microglial cells in the brain, and pulmonary alveolar macrophages.^{243,244} Lymphoid tissue macrophages were identified as prolific producers of HIV in the setting of advanced HIV disease two decades ago,²⁴⁵ and more recently as a source of potent pro-inflammatory factors.²⁴⁶

In pre-ART years, HIV-induced CNS disease was common and involved infection and activation of microglia and perivascular macrophages in the CNS. The process resulted in neurologic impairment, including encephalopathy, neuropathy, astrocytosis, and cerebral vasculitis. The inflammatory processes linked to HIV-associated dementia have been associated with several factors, including chemokines and cytokines that are produced by activated macrophages.^{243,244} Increased levels of lipopolysaccharide (LPS), a highly inflammatory bacterial product that preferentially binds to macrophages through interactions with CD14 and Toll-like receptors, are observed in the serum of HIV-infected individuals. The binding of LPS to monocytes may promote disruption of the blood-brain barrier, further enhancing the migration of activated monocytes into the CNS and thus contributing to HIV-associated dementia.²⁴⁷ Even in individuals whose HIV viremia is controlled by ART, there is evidence for residual neurocognitive disorders that are likely to be associated with residual macrophage activation.²⁴⁴

Dendritic Cells

DCs are among the first cells to encounter HIV after mucosal exposure and are probably responsible for transporting the virus to lymphoid organs, thus facilitating infection of CD4⁺ T cells and viral dissemination (see “Dissemination of HIV Infection”). Whereas DCs express several different chemokine receptors that can be used as HIV coreceptors for entry,²⁴⁸ there is limited evidence that DCs become productively infected *in vivo*. Instead, DCs are more likely to be involved in capturing HIV, forming conjugates with CD4⁺ T cells by way of long flexible filopodia, and contributing to the formation of infectious viral synapses.²⁴⁹ This sequence of events is thought to be highly efficient at promoting the transmission of HIV virions from DCs to CD4⁺ T cells. Several C-type lectin receptors, including DC-SIGN and langerin, which are differentially expressed on subsets of DCs, play an important role in the capture of HIV virions by DCs.²⁷

Early studies provided conflicting data on the dysfunction of DCs during HIV infection. Interpretation of these studies was complicated by the use of different DC purification techniques, existence of multiple poorly defined DC subsets, and differential culture conditions used by investigators. The delineation of DCs into subsets that reflect origin, location, and function—namely mDCs and plasmacytoid dendritic cells (pDCs)—has helped clarify their dysregulation in HIV infection. The mDCs are further classified by tissue location and circulation, and although their importance in antigen presentation is well established, their sensing properties and how HIV evades them have been more recently described.¹⁹⁶ Viral infections are sensed by cells of the innate immune system through PRRs such as TLRs. Type I IFNs, including IFN- α , produced primarily by pDCs, are one of the first sensing mechanisms induced by viral infections, including HIV. In this regard, recent findings suggest that type I IFNs can block SIV infection, but that in chronic infection, they have a detrimental effect (see “Cytokines and HIV Disease: Dysregulation of Cytokine Production”).²⁵⁰ HIV infection can also lead to a decrease in the number of circulating pDCs through mechanisms that are not well delineated but may involve direct infection with HIV or direct interactions with the HIV envelope, redistribution to lymphoid tissues, and apoptosis.^{40,251} Several mechanisms of immune dysfunction in HIV disease have also been attributed to pDCs, including secretion of factors that induce Treg cells, which then suppress the antiviral response, and induction of apoptosis-mediating ligands on pDCs.²⁵² Finally, there are also indications that the increase in Tregs and reciprocal depletion of Th17 cells in the gut of HIV-infected individuals is in part due to inflammatory factors secreted by chronically activated mDCs and pDCs.²⁵³

ROLE OF IMMUNE ACTIVATION IN THE PATHOGENESIS OF HIV INFECTION

The end result of HIV infection is profound immunodeficiency; however, paradoxically, HIV infection is associated with hyperactivation of the immune system throughout most of the course of disease.²²⁸ HIV subverts the immune system by inducing immune activation, using this milieu toward its own replicative advantage, and causing widespread damage to the immune system. Whereas it is well accepted that the replicative cycle of HIV infection is most efficiently achieved in activated cells,^{162,163} most of the damage caused by HIV is not the result of direct infection of CD4⁺ T cells but, rather, the widespread bystander activation, dysregulation, and cell death of CD4⁺ T cells and other cells of the immune system.²¹³ In this regard, numerous studies have demonstrated that the level of CD8⁺ T-cell activation, as measured through expression of CD38 and HLA-DR, is a better correlate of HIV disease progression than HIV viremia.⁴ More recently, alterations in expression and secretion of factors or biomarkers, especially those associated with the myeloid lineage such as soluble CD14 and D-dimer, among others,²⁴⁴ have also been proposed as indicators of immune activation induced by both active viral replication and by the residual effects of viremia in individuals receiving effective ART.¹⁷⁹ The persistence of immune activation in individuals receiving ART is thought to explain, at least in part, their increased risk of comorbidities, such as cardiovascular and liver diseases, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and malignancies.^{254,255}

With regard to T cells, and to a lesser extent B cells and NK cells, the evidence for HIV-induced immune activation is severalfold. There is a high frequency of cells expressing markers of activation and cell cycling that is accompanied by homeostatic dysregulation and cell death during ongoing HIV replication.^{187,213} Many of these manifestations are attenuated or reversed by effective ART. One of the most widely accepted indirect pieces of evidence that immune activation plays a major role in HIV immunopathogenesis is the nonpathogenic outcome of SIV infection in its natural host. In the case of naturally SIV-infected sooty mangabeys, high levels of SIV viremia occur in the absence of generalized immune activation and progressive CD4⁺ T-cell depletion.²¹⁰ In further contrast to HIV infection, which almost invariably leads to AIDS if left untreated, SIV infection in natural hosts almost never leads to disease progression. Over the years, the differences between pathogenic HIV infection in humans and nonpathogenic SIV infection in nonhuman primates, such as sooty mangabeys, have been extensively investigated.

The most consistent feature of these comparisons remains the lack of generalized immune activation in natural SIV infection, with a muting of the innate immune response, including systemic inflammation and a strong type I IFN response after the acute phase, being the most important difference observed between naturally controlled SIV and uncontrolled HIV infections.^{169,210}

The underlying causes of HIV-induced immune activation, increased cell turnover, and eventual depletion of CD4⁺ T cells remain a matter of debate. There is a growing body of evidence, mainly from NHP models,¹⁶⁹ that the early innate immune proinflammatory response that occurs at mucosal sites leads to recruitment and activation of adaptive immune cells, including HIV target cells, which then allow the virus to disseminate to secondary lymphoid tissues for rapid amplification before an effective adaptive immune response. A number of studies have shown that when this initial phase of viral replication is blunted,^{30,74} immunologic and/or virologic control ensues and disease progression can be averted. In the absence of early intervention, the early massive depletion of CD4⁺ T cells in mucosal and other lymphoid tissues leads to a chronic state of increased proliferation, activation, and cell death. The eventual systemic depletion of CD4⁺ T cells that characterizes AIDS is also explained by a pronounced loss of naïve and central memory CD4⁺ T cells, both of which are strictly regulated and may be more prone to regenerative failure than other lymphocytes.¹⁸⁷

There are important consequences of generalized immune activation that likely contribute to the inefficiency of the HIV-specific immune response and to the eventual impairment of the regenerative potential of the entire immune system. The increase in immune activation and inflammation that arises from persistent HIV replication is accompanied by an expansion of exhausted T cells and B cells and by increased levels of immunoregulatory factors such as IL-10.²⁵⁶ Exhaustion is defined by decreased proliferative and effector function, alterations in homing receptor expression patterns consistent with migration to sites of inflammation, and increased expression of inhibitory receptors,¹⁹⁰ such as PD-1, 2B4, LAG-3, CD160, and Tim-3 on CD8⁺ T cells, and PD-1 and CTLA-4 on CD4⁺ T cells.^{108,110} A reversal of HIV-specific exhausted T cells has been demonstrated with PD-1 and CTLA-4 antagonists, many of which are used as checkpoint blockers in treatment of certain cancers.⁸

The effect of generalized immune activation on the immune system also includes gradual destruction of lymph node architecture and changes in the composition of lymphoid tissues that impede immune function. The changes in lymph node architecture that occur with HIV infection and persistent viremia include progressive damage to follicular structures, from hyperplasia to lysis, atrophy, and involution; each stage has increasing deleterious effects, both on the generation of effective immune responses and on T-cell homeostasis.¹⁶⁸ Collagen deposition and fibrosis have also been shown to contribute to defects in normal T-cell homeostasis, and similar effects have been proposed for B cells.^{168,218}

CYTOKINES AND HIV DISEASE: DYSREGULATION OF CYTOKINE PRODUCTION

One important facet of chronic immune activation induced by HIV infection is the increased production of proinflammatory cytokines and chemokines. Early after infection, high levels of TNF- α , IP-10, IFN- γ , and IL-6 are found in serum. Several cytokines have been shown to upregulate HIV expression in infected cells.²⁵⁷ High *in vivo* levels of cytokines, which are unique to acute HIV at least in potency and breadth,²⁵⁸ are commonly referred to as a cytokine storm.²⁵⁴ Levels of other proinflammatory and immunoregulatory cytokines increase over the course of HIV disease, including IL-1 β , IL-10, and transforming growth factor- β (TGF- β), the last of which is particularly evident in lymphoid tissues and is thought to contribute to the deposition of collagen and ensuing damage to the stromal FRC network on which lymphocytes migrate.^{168,218} The production of proinflammatory cytokines and chemokines is thought to originate, at least in part, from innate immune cells such as inflammatory monocytes and neutrophils as a result of increased expression of PRRs such as Toll-like receptors.⁵ In this regard, the triggering of Toll-like receptors, as part of the innate immune responses against HIV or because of mucosal leaching of microbial

products such as LPS, is thought to lead to secretion of proinflammatory cytokines by macrophages and DCs.²⁵⁴

The role of pDCs in shaping the cytokine milieu in HIV-infected individuals is considered potentially very important, although difficult to ascertain because of the low frequency of pDCs in the circulation. Although numbers of pDCs may be decreased in the peripheral blood of HIV-infected individuals, their induction and secretion of copious amounts of IFN- α is most likely to occur as part of the host innate immune response to HIV. In this regard, the induction of type I IFNs as part of the early response to HIV can be highly beneficial, as shown in a recent NHP model.²⁵⁰ However, it is the chronic effect of these pathways that is thought to be detrimental, and numerous studies have shown that ongoing HIV replication is associated with the induction of numerous IFN-induced genes in all major lymphocyte populations.¹⁹⁶ Among these IFN-induced genes are ones coding for death receptors and ligands that have been associated with increased susceptibility to apoptosis of lymphocytes isolated from HIV-viremic individuals. These include Fas and FasL and the ligand TRAIL and accompanying death receptors DR4 and DR5. These latter receptors have also been associated with T-cell exhaustion,²⁵⁹ as has TNF most recently, which is one of the cytokines strongly induced by HIV and now being proposed as a critical link between inflammation and T-cell dysregulation in chronic viral infections.²⁶⁰

Another disruption in cytokine networks observed in HIV disease is a progressive loss of the ability to produce immunoregulatory cytokines, such as IL-2, that reflects changes in CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T-cell effector function (see “Cellular Immune Responses”). Whereas functional impairment was once attributed to loss of Th1 cytokines (secretion of IL-2 and IFN- γ) and possible dominance of Th2-like responses (i.e., secretion of IL-4, IL-5, and IL-10) during progression of HIV disease, many of these paradigms have been complicated by plasticity between subsets and the identification of other CD4⁺ T-cell subsets. These include Th17 cells, which reside primarily in skin and mucosal tissues, produce IL-17 and IL-22, and play important roles in antibacterial and antifungal immunity.²⁶¹ In mucosal tissue dysregulation associated with HIV-induced immune activation, the secretion of indoleamine 2,3-dioxygenase, an immunomodulatory enzyme, by DCs leads to suppression of Th17 cells while inducing the development of Tregs.²⁶² Although the role of Tregs in HIV disease remains controversial, there does appear to be a consensus that the balance of Tregs and Th17 is disrupted in HIV-infected individuals as a result of persistent immune activation and that these changes are, in part, driven by increases in Treg suppressive cytokines, such as TGF- β and IL-10.²⁶¹

Role of Cytokines as Therapeutic Agents in HIV Infection

The use of cytokine-based therapies aimed at immune reconstitution and immune modulation in HIV disease has expanded over the past decade, particularly with the knowledge that ART alone is unable to restore CD4⁺ T-cell numbers and function completely. However, each approach has faced challenges, and the prospects of cytokine-based therapeutic interventions remain unclear.

Most cytokine-based therapies have been aimed at T-cell deficiencies in the common gamma chain (γ c) family of cytokines. Among this family, IL-2 initially received the most attention because it was first considered as a therapeutic agent in 1983.²⁶³ Several years of trials and detailed analyses have determined that intermittent administration of IL-2, although associated with a sustained expansion of naïve and memory regulatory CD4⁺ T cells and diminution in levels of activation and apoptosis, does not appear to provide sustained clinical benefits.²⁶⁴ Two additional members of the γ c family of cytokines—IL-7 and IL-15—are being considered as therapeutic agents to improve T-cell function in HIV-infected individuals.

IL-7 is primarily produced by stromal and epithelial cells in the thymus, lymph nodes, and intestinal epithelium and binds to IL-7R α (CD127) complexed with common γ c.²¹¹ IL-7 is considered a major regulator of thymocyte development and of the survival and homeostasis of naïve and memory T cells. In HIV-infected individuals, high levels of IL-7 are detected in serum, especially in advanced CD4⁺ T-cell lymphopenia.²⁶⁵ These increased levels of IL-7 are thought to result from lower clearance due to decreased presence of cells expressing

CD127.²¹¹ Nonetheless, several clinical studies in humans have also demonstrated that administration of IL-7 leads to improvement of T-cell homeostasis, repertoire, and function without inducing increased Tregs as had been shown to occur with IL-2 administration.⁸ There are also indications that IL-7 is less toxic than IL-2 and may also improve reconstitution of lymphoid tissues. However, concerns remain, including that HIV may cause CD4⁺ T cells to be refractory to IL-7 signals and that IL-7 may lead to increased HIV replication.²⁶⁶ IL-15, also a member of the γ c family, is produced by antigen-presenting cells, including monocyte-macrophages and DCs, and binds to the IL-2R β complexed with common γ c. In both HIV-infected and HIV-negative individuals, IL-15 induces many of the same responses as IL-2. However, in contrast with IL-2 and IL-7, IL-15 may be most effective at driving the expansion and tissue emigration of CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ effector memory T cells. However, these findings were described in an SIV model, and it remains to be seen how IL-15 will modulate T cells in HIV-infected individuals. There are also concerns that IL-15 may be difficult to implement as part of a clinical regimen of immune reconstitution, given that it can accelerate disease progression when administered during the acute phase of infection, and also accelerate lymphoid tissue damage and fibrosis.²¹¹ Finally, IL-21, also a member of the γ c family, is produced primarily by Th1 and Th17 cells and has been proposed to enhance HIV-specific cell-mediated and humoral responses based on findings in animal models and LTNP/ECs.²⁰⁴

CONCLUSIONS

HIV is the quintessential opportunist, as illustrated by its ability to subvert activation of the immune system to its own replicative advantage. The virus can disarm multiple components of the host immune response by direct and indirect mechanisms. Further understanding of the interactions between the virus and host that lead to dysfunction and depletion of multiple components of the immune system should aid in the development of preventive and therapeutic strategies. Whereas effective ART currently remains the best approach for delaying HIV disease progression, several therapeutic interventions are being considered, including those intended to boost the immune system, such as vaccines, or to reverse HIV-induced cellular exhaustion, such as checkpoint inhibitors. Other immune-based therapies, including bNAb-based interventions with and without ART, are being considered. There are also indications that therapeutics aimed at dampening HIV-induced immune activation may be beneficial, especially early during the course of infection. Finally, agents aimed at purging HIV from latent and other viral reservoirs are also being evaluated, although such modalities aimed at eradicating HIV from infected individuals have been unsuccessful thus far. However, regardless of the approach, there is growing agreement that virologic remission involving some degree of induced immunologic control may be a more attainable goal than achieving complete eradication.

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General Clinical Manifestations of Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection (Including Acute Retroviral Syndrome and Oral, Cutaneous, Renal, Ocular, Metabolic, and Cardiac Diseases)

Timothy R. Sterling and Richard E. Chaisson

SHORT VIEW SUMMARY

ACUTE RETROVIRAL SYNDROME

- This syndrome is the initial manifestation of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.
- One-half to two-thirds of patients present with an acute mononucleosis-like illness (see Table 122.1), often with a truncal exanthem.
- Symptoms generally resolve within 10 to 15 days.

PERSISTENT GENERALIZED LYMPHADENOPATHY

- This disorder occurs in 50% to 70% of people with HIV infection and usually affects the cervical, submandibular, occipital, and axillary regions.
- In patients treated with antiretroviral therapy (ART), previously involuted nodes may enlarge.

METABOLIC AND ENDOCRINE ABNORMALITIES

- Hypogonadism, adrenal insufficiency, constitutional wasting, lipid abnormalities,

insulin resistance, lipodystrophy, and osteoporosis have been reported.

ORAL DISEASE

- Oral candidiasis, oral hairy leukoplakia, gingivitis, and periodontitis may occur.

CUTANEOUS DISEASE

- Dermatologic consequences include cutaneous infections (herpes simplex virus, varicella-zoster virus, molluscum contagiosum, scabies, bacillary angiomatosis, and Kaposi sarcoma).

RENAL DISEASE

- Multiple causes of renal disease may affect patients with HIV infection as well as a specific HIV-related nephropathy, which includes proteinuria, mildly elevated serum creatinine concentration reflecting glomerular

injury, mesangial proliferation, and tubular degeneration.

CARDIAC DISEASE

- Accelerated atherosclerosis with myocardial infarction is seen in patients with HIV infection who have been treated with ART and appears to be associated with elevations in proinflammatory cytokines and prothrombotic markers.
- Myocarditis and pericarditis are also found.

IMMUNE RECONSTITUTION SYNDROMES

- Immune reconstitution syndromes are seen after ART and can involve *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, *Mycobacterium avium* complex, *Cryptococcus neoformans*, cytomegalovirus, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, lymphoma, and other opportunistic diseases.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection results in a wide range of clinical consequences from asymptomatic infection despite active viral replication to severe immunodeficiency with life-threatening opportunistic disease. In people infected with HIV, ongoing viral replication produces a steady decline in and eventual ablation of cell-mediated immunity as well as marked immune activation and inflammation, all of which give rise to diverse manifestations of opportunistic disease. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), in which the infected host can no longer control opportunistic organisms or malignancies that rarely cause illness in immunocompetent individuals, is the most advanced stage of this illness. Major advances in treatment with antiretroviral drugs have dramatically altered the clinical course of HIV infection and converted what was once a highly fatal disease into a manageable chronic condition. For individuals with access to antiretroviral therapy (ART), median life expectancy following infection has increased from 10 to 12 years to 25 to 50 years, depending on age at infection.¹ Despite these impressive improvements in survival, treated chronic HIV infection is associated with immune activation and chronic inflammation that can result in damage to a number of organ systems. Current research is focused on finding a cure (or functional cure) for HIV infection and treating its inflammatory complications to prevent cardiovascular, renal, endocrinologic, and neurologic consequences.

HISTORY

Disease caused by HIV was first described in late 1980 and early 1981 with outbreaks of Kaposi sarcoma and opportunistic infections due to

Pneumocystis jirovecii, herpes simplex, and cytomegalovirus (CMV) in young men who have sex with men (MSM).²⁻⁷ In 1982 the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a case definition based on clinical, immunologic, and epidemiologic features for what was termed the *acquired immunodeficiency syndrome*.⁸ Soon after the initial case reports of AIDS, additional cases were reported in heterosexual injection drug users, immigrants from Haiti,⁸⁻¹² people with hemophilia, recipients of blood transfusions, and Africans.^{13,14} As the groups of people at risk for AIDS expanded, clinicians noted an increasing spectrum of clinical manifestations of AIDS-associated immunodeficiency such as generalized lymphadenopathy, idiopathic thrombocytopenia, oral candidiasis, and a constitutional wasting syndrome.¹⁵⁻¹⁸ The now archaic term *AIDS-related complex* was coined to describe the signs and symptoms of immunodeficiency recognized with increasing frequency in people at risk for AIDS.^{19,20} After HIV was first described in 1983-84,²¹⁻²³ serologic tests to identify people infected with HIV were developed that allowed large serologic surveys of at-risk populations to estimate the number of individuals infected with the virus and to delineate the spectrum of HIV-associated diseases.

Over almost 40 years, case definitions and classifications of HIV disease have evolved to reflect a growing understanding of pathogenesis, natural history, and therapeutics. Many of the common manifestations from the earliest days of the epidemic are rarely seen in high-income countries and are becoming less frequent in low-income and middle-income countries.

NATURAL HISTORY OF HIV INFECTION

The clinical spectrum of untreated HIV infection includes primary infection (acute retroviral syndrome) (Table 122.1), asymptomatic infection, early symptomatic infection, and advanced immunodeficiency with opportunistic complications and, ultimately, death. Fig. 122.1 shows a schematic diagram of the key immunologic, viral, and clinical features of HIV infection in untreated individuals. Untreated HIV infection is characterized by active viral replication that results in progressive immunodeficiency and serious clinical consequences. Although many patients may be unaware of their infection, HIV is usually not virologically latent, and chronic viremia, inflammation, and

TABLE 122.1 Symptoms and Signs of Acute Retroviral Syndrome in 209 Patients

SYMPTOM OR SIGN	NO. WITH FINDING	FREQUENCY (%)
Fever	200	96
Adenopathy	154	74
Pharyngitis	146	70
Rash	146	70
Myalgia or arthralgia	112	54
Thrombocytopenia	94	45
Leukopenia	80	38
Diarrhea	67	32
Headache	66	32
Nausea, vomiting	56	27
Elevated aminotransferase levels ^a	38	21
Hepatosplenomegaly	30	14
Thrush	24	12
Neuropathy	13	6
Encephalopathy	12	6

^aBased on 178 subjects.

Modified from Niu MT, Stein DS, Schnittman SM. Primary human immunodeficiency virus type 1 infection: review of pathogenesis and early treatment intervention in human and animal retrovirus infections. *J Infect Dis.* 1993;168:1490–1501.

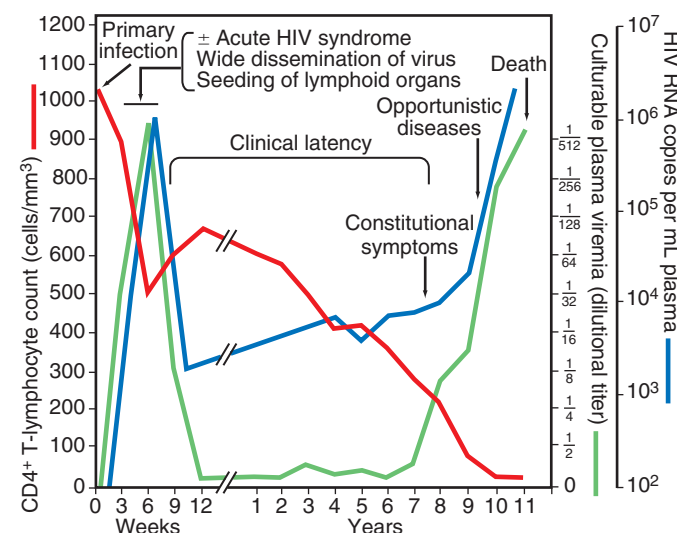


FIG. 122.1 Natural history of HIV infection in the absence of therapy in a hypothetical patient. (From Fauci AS, Pantaleo G, Stanley S, et al. *Immunopathogenic mechanisms of HIV infection.* *Ann Intern Med.* 1996;124:654–663.)

progressive immunodeficiency result in significant impairment and death. Viral load or viremia is monitored by measurement of HIV-1 RNA in plasma, and immunologic status is reflected by the absolute number of CD4⁺ lymphocytes or the proportion of lymphocytes that express CD4⁺. Primary HIV infection is characterized by a high concentration of HIV-1 RNA in plasma and suppression of the CD4⁺ cell count. Plasma viremia declines precipitously with antibody seroconversion and the development of an anti-HIV immune response, usually reaching a steady-state level or setpoint within 6 to 12 months.^{24,25} In most untreated asymptomatic patients, the CD4⁺ count declines gradually over several years. The slope of decline is a function of the plasma viral load. Plasma viremia increases, accompanied by a more rapid decline in CD4⁺ count, before the onset of symptomatic disease. As the viral load increases and the CD4⁺ count falls, the risk for opportunistic infections, malignancies, wasting, neurologic complications, and death increases substantially.

There is considerable variation in the progression of HIV disease, with some individuals progressing from infection to AIDS in less than 5 years²⁶ and so-called long-term nonprogressors remaining asymptomatic without treatment or evidence of immunologic decline for many years.^{26,27} Long-term nonprogressors appear to fall into at least two categories. Most have detectable viremia but maintain CD4⁺ counts that provide adequate protection from the development of opportunistic disease. These individuals generally have gradual loss of CD4⁺ lymphocytes, however, and eventually progress to advanced immunodeficiency. A much smaller group of individuals (<1%) are so-called elite controllers, who have undetectable HIV viral loads and maintain normal CD4⁺ counts.²⁸ This group is of considerable interest because of their ability to remain aviremic. However, studies have shown that such individuals have increased immune activation, have ongoing viral replication in CD4⁺ cells, and experience higher rates of hospitalization for cardiovascular conditions and other non-AIDS-related illnesses than individuals treated with ART.^{29–31} Nonetheless, understanding the mechanisms whereby these patients control HIV is of potential value for the development of HIV vaccines and functional cures for HIV.

Before the availability of effective ART, the rate of progression from initial HIV infection to AIDS among MSM in San Francisco was 9.8 years.³² Other studies estimated the period from infection to AIDS to be 7 years for transfusion recipients and 10 years for hemophiliacs and injection drug users.³³ In the absence of treatment, survival is short after diagnosis of clinically defined AIDS. Studies of survival of the first patients with AIDS in San Francisco and New York found a median survival of 9 to 12 months, with most patients dead within 2 years.^{34,35} Patients with a diagnosis of an opportunistic infection had the most rapid mortality, whereas survival was significantly longer in patients with an initial diagnosis of Kaposi sarcoma. Subsequent studies revealed that survival after diagnosis of AIDS was directly related to the CD4⁺ count at diagnosis. In most studies before the availability of effective ART, median survival after diagnosis of AIDS was estimated to be between 12 and 18 months.³⁶ The mean survival time after a CD4⁺ count of 200 cells/mm³ was 38 to 40 months.^{37,38}

A number of laboratory tests have been correlated with progressive immunodeficiency, the development of AIDS, and mortality. Taken together, however, the CD4⁺ lymphocyte count and plasma viral load are the best prognostic markers for subsequent disease course in an HIV-infected individual. The CD4⁺ count, a specific test for cellular immunocompetence, is a sensitive predictor of the development of symptomatic HIV infection and AIDS in the near term because it reflects current immunologic capacity.^{39–43} Conversely, the plasma viral load (HIV-1 RNA) is an extremely useful predictor of disease course over a more extended period and is strongly associated with the rate of subsequent CD4⁺ count decline.^{44–52} A more rapid decline in CD4⁺ count, faster clinical progression, and decreased survival all are associated with a higher baseline viral load. In a study of HIV-infected MSM (homosexual or bisexual men) enrolled in the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study, the risk for progression to AIDS and death was highly correlated with plasma viral load at study entry, independent of CD4⁺ count.^{47,48} Baseline plasma viral load was a stronger predictor of progression and mortality than CD4⁺ count. In addition, the average annual decline in the CD4⁺ count of HIV-infected men varied according to their initial viral load, decreasing by 36 CD4⁺ cells per year in men with baseline

TABLE 122.2 Probability of Developing AIDS in 1604 Men in the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study

BASELINE VIRAL LOAD ^c	BASELINE CD4 ⁺ COUNT ^d	NO. STUDIED	NO. WITH AIDS	% AIDS AT 3 YEARS	% AIDS AT 6 YEARS	% AIDS AT 9 YEARS
<500	>750	66	3	0	1.7	3.6
	<750	56	13	3.7	9.6	22.3
501–3000	Any	257	90	2.0	16.6	35.4
3001–10,000	>750	93	39	3.2	14.2	59.7
	<750	300	179	8.1	37.7	62.4
10,001–30,000	>750	64	42	9.5	36.7	62.4
	351–750	259	194	16.1	54.9	76.3
	≤350	73	63	40.1	72.9	86.2
>30,000	>500	141	105	32.6	66.8	76.3
	351–500	121	111	47.9	77.7	94.4
	201–350	104	92	64.4	89.3	92.9
	<200	70	67	85.5	97.9	100

^a1987 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention case definition.

^bBased on baseline HIV branched-chain DNA viral load and CD4⁺ cell count.

^cHIV RNA copies/mL of plasma by branched-chain DNA. Viral load determined by reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction approximately twofold greater.

^dCD4⁺ cells/mm³.

Data from Mellors JW, Munoz A, Giorgi JV, et al. Plasma viral load and CD4⁺ lymphocytes as prognostic markers of HIV-1 infection. *Ann Intern Med.* 1997;126:946–954.

HIV-1 RNA less than 500 copies/mL and by 77 CD4⁺ cells per year in men with baseline HIV-1 RNA higher than 30,000 copies/mL.⁴⁷ Using the viral load and CD4⁺ count together, however, provides the best prognostic estimate of subsequent clinical course (Table 122.2 and Fig. 122.2). Put in the context of HIV pathogenesis, the viral load measures the replicative rate of the infection and its destructive potential for the cellular immune system, and the CD4⁺ count gauges the extent of immune compromise and the present risk for opportunistic disease. Rather than initiate ART on all HIV-infected individuals as early as possible, guidelines for initiating ART have historically been based on CD4⁺ counts and plasma viral load due to ART toxicity with prolonged use. In addition, opportunistic infection prophylaxis has been based on the current CD4⁺ count, which determines the short-term risks for developing specific infections (e.g., *P. jirovecii* pneumonia or disseminated *Mycobacterium avium* complex infection) and death. Frequent monitoring of CD4⁺ counts was previously recommended for patients not on ART to determine when treatment was indicated and for patients on ART to assess their response to therapy. However, as studies have demonstrated the long-term value of treating all HIV-infected individuals regardless of CD4⁺ count, this is now recommended.⁵³ Use of plasma viral load to monitor treatment response is now preferred, with monitoring of CD4⁺ counts recommended at the start of treatment and periodically for individuals with initially low counts to determine when to discontinue opportunistic infection prophylaxis. No CD4⁺ cell monitoring is considered necessary for individuals with initial counts >500 cells/mm³.

The rate of progression of HIV infection in population-based studies varies depending on age, with older individuals generally having a more rapidly progressive course.^{54–58} Patients who experience more severe symptoms during acute retroviral syndrome tend to have higher viral loads after seroconversion and progress more rapidly than patients who seroconvert without symptoms.⁵⁹ Women have approximately half-log₁₀ lower HIV-1 RNA than men after seroconversion, but this difference diminishes with time from seroconversion.^{60–62} Although HIV-1 RNA is an important predictor of subsequent disease progression in both women and men,^{47,63,64} there is no sex difference in HIV disease progression, particularly when women and men have equal access to care.^{65–67} There do not appear to be racial differences in HIV-1 RNA levels⁶⁸ or the natural history of HIV disease progression.^{65,69} Geographic differences in the risk of infections that can occur at higher CD4⁺ counts such as tuberculosis, salmonellosis, and some bacterial pneumonias can result in shorter survival times for individuals in low-income and middle-income countries.

Other laboratory studies that predict the development of AIDS in populations of HIV-infected people include total lymphocyte count less than 1000 cells/mm³, total white blood cell count less than 4000 cells/mm³, and hematocrit less than 40 mL/dL. Although these tests are readily available and inexpensive, they do not discriminate short-term

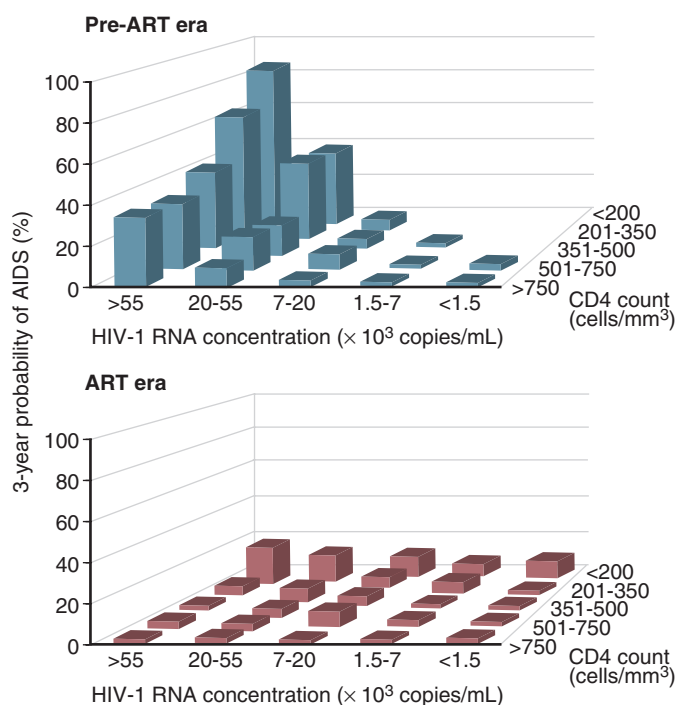


FIG. 122.2 Prognosis according to CD4⁺ cell count and viral load in the pre-antiretroviral therapy (ART) and ART eras. These data were from 12,574 adult patients starting ART with a combination of at least three drugs. Kaplan-Meier estimates of the probability of AIDS at 3 years are shown. (From Egger M, May M, Chene G, et al. Prognosis of HIV-1-infected patients starting highly active antiretroviral therapy: a collaborative analysis of prospective studies. *Lancet.* 2002;360:119–129.)

risks for individuals as well as CD4⁺ counts and are generally not used for clinical management. Other markers of HIV disease progression that have been validated in clinical studies but are not widely used include the HIV p24 antigen, serum β_2 -microglobulin, neopterin, acid-labile interferon- α , anti-p24 antibody, and soluble CD8. These so-called surrogate markers are measures of virus presence or host immune responses to HIV. These measures do not provide prognostic information independent of the viral load and have therefore been supplanted by quantitative plasma HIV-1 RNA monitoring in developed countries. Low-cost alternatives to flow cytometric quantification of CD4⁺ lymphocytes for application in resource-poor settings are now

available and include manual assays that use enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay or bead-based formats.⁷⁰

CLASSIFICATION OF HIV INFECTION

In the early years of the HIV pandemic, surveillance case definitions for AIDS were necessary for tracking the growth of the epidemic; as awareness of the clinical spectrum of HIV infection grew, the number of conditions diagnostic of AIDS increased. In addition, staging systems for HIV were developed by the CDC, World Health Organization (WHO), Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and others, incorporating clinical and laboratory features into discrete categories with differing prognoses. Distinguishing between HIV infection and AIDS was historically useful for epidemiologic purposes, but the difference is arbitrary and is less meaningful from a clinical perspective in an era of potent ART. At the present time, two classification systems are in wide use. The 2014 CDC Revised Surveillance Case Definition for HIV infection includes four stages based on laboratory testing, CD4⁺ lymphocyte count and percentage, and clinical evidence including AIDS-defining conditions (Table 122.3).⁷¹

The CDC classification system for HIV infection recognizes the prognostic significance of the CD4⁺ count in individuals with HIV infection, but there is considerable variation in risk for opportunistic complications and prognosis in individuals with CD4⁺ counts <200 cells/mm³. Individuals with CD4⁺ counts <50 cells/mm³, for example, are generally considered to have advanced HIV disease and are at much higher risk for the development of opportunistic infections such as CMV disease or disseminated *Mycobacterium avium* complex infection and death. The CDC classification system was initially developed at a time when the inevitable course of HIV infection was progression toward advanced immunodeficiency and death and when drug therapy was of limited and transient efficacy in stemming the course of the disease. According to the CDC classification system, HIV-infected individuals are classified on the basis of the most advanced stage that they have reached.⁷¹ In the present era, patients treated with ART usually experience marked improvement in cellular immune function and may have a normal or near-normal life expectancy with dramatically lower risk for developing opportunistic disease than they had before receiving treatment.⁷² There is no current mechanism for reclassifying patients on the basis of immunologic and clinical improvement resulting from ART, a situation that understandably curtails use of the CDC system.

The WHO classification system (Tables 122.4, 122.5, and 122.6) is used primarily in resource-limited countries. However, there are limitations that make it difficult for this staging system to be uniformly implemented. Many of the classifications require the diagnosis of opportunistic infections that cannot be readily confirmed in most resource-limited settings; clinical criteria for establishing presumptive or definitive diagnoses may be useful. Estimates of weight loss and other constitutional symptoms are also difficult in such settings. The CDC and WHO staging systems are compared in Table 122.7.

CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS

HIV infection causes disease manifestations of three principal types: (1) an acute viral illness seen in the initial weeks of infection and associated with a high viral load and an intense host immune response; (2) immunologically mediated processes related to host responses to chronic viral infection in the absence of ART (e.g., lymphadenopathy, thrombocytopenia, HIV-related dementia) or persistent inflammation

TABLE 122.3 HIV Infection Staging Systems

STAGE	LABORATORY EVIDENCE ^a	CLINICAL EVIDENCE
Stage 0	Negative or indeterminate HIV test result within 180 days before first confirmed positive HIV test result of any type or Sequence of tests that demonstrate the presence of HIV-specific viral markers such as p24 antigen or nucleic acid (RNA or DNA) 0–180 days before or after antibody test that had a negative or indeterminate result	None required (but no AIDS-defining condition)
Stage 1	Laboratory confirmation of HIV infection and CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of >500 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of ≥29	None required (but no AIDS-defining condition)
Stage 2	Laboratory confirmation of HIV infection and CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of 200–499 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of 14–28	None required (but no AIDS-defining condition)
Stage 3 (AIDS)	Laboratory confirmation of HIV infection and CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of <200 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of <14 ^b	Or documentation of AIDS-defining condition (with laboratory confirmation of HIV infection) ^b
Stage unknown ^c	Laboratory confirmation of HIV infection and no information on CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count or percentage	And no information on presence of AIDS-defining conditions

^aThe CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage is the percentage of total lymphocytes. If the CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte count and percentage do not correspond to the same HIV infection stage, select the more severe stage.

^bDocumentation of an AIDS-defining condition supersedes a CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte count of ≥200 cells/mm³ and a CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of total lymphocytes of ≥14.

^cAlthough cases with no information on CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte count or percentage or on the presence of AIDS-defining conditions can be classified as stage unknown, every effort should be made to report CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte counts or percentages and the presence of AIDS-defining conditions at the time of diagnosis. Additional CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte counts or percentages and any identified AIDS-defining conditions can be reported as recommended.

Data from Selik RM, Mokotoff ED, Branson B, et al; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Revised surveillance case definitions for HIV infection—United States, 2014. MMWR Recomm Rep. 2014;63(RR03):1–10.

TABLE 122.4 World Health Organization Clinical Staging of Established HIV Infection

HIV-ASSOCIATED SYMPTOMS	WHO CLINICAL STAGE
Asymptomatic	1
Mild symptoms	2
Advanced symptoms	3
Severe symptoms	4

WHO, World Health Organization.

TABLE 122.5 World Health Organization Immunologic Classification for Established HIV Infection

HIV-ASSOCIATED IMMUNODEFICIENCY	AGE-RELATED CD4 VALUES			
	<11 Months (% CD4 ⁺)	12–35 Months (% CD4 ⁺)	36–59 Months (% CD4 ⁺)	>5 Years (Absolute No./mm ³ or % CD4 ⁺)
None or not significant	>35	>30	>25	>500
Mild	30–35	25–30	20–25	350–500
Advanced	25–29	20–24	15–19	200–349
Severe	<25	<20	<15	<200 or <15%

TABLE 122.6 World Health Organization Clinical Staging of HIV/AIDS for Adults and Adolescents With Confirmed HIV Infection**Clinical Stage 1**

Asymptomatic
Persistent generalized lymphadenopathy

Clinical Stage 2

Moderate unexplained weight loss (<10% of presumed or measured body weight)^a
Recurrent respiratory tract infections (e.g., sinusitis, tonsillitis, otitis media, pharyngitis)
Herpes zoster
Angular cheilitis
Recurrent oral ulceration
Papular pruritic eruptions
Seborrheic dermatitis
Fungal nail infections

Clinical Stage 3

Unexplained^a severe weight loss (>10% of presumed or measured body weight)
Unexplained chronic diarrhea for longer than 1 month
Unexplained persistent fever (>37.6°C [99.7°F]), intermittent or constant, for longer than 1 month
Persistent oral candidiasis
Oral hairy leukoplakia
Pulmonary tuberculosis (current)
Severe bacterial infections (e.g., pneumonia, empyema, pyomyositis, bone or joint infection, meningitis, or bacteremia)
Acute necrotizing ulcerative stomatitis, gingivitis, or periodontitis
Unexplained anemia (<8 g/dL), neutropenia (<0.5 × 10⁹/L), or chronic thrombocytopenia (<50 × 10⁹/L)

Clinical Stage 4^b

HIV wasting syndrome
Pneumocystis jirovecii
Recurrent severe bacterial pneumonia
Chronic herpes simplex infection (orolabial, genital, or anorectal, for longer than 1 month, or visceral at any site)
Esophageal candidiasis (or candidiasis of trachea, bronchi, or lungs)
Extrapulmonary tuberculosis
Kaposi sarcoma
Cytomegalovirus infection (retinitis or infection of other organs)
Central nervous system toxoplasmosis
HIV encephalopathy
Extrapulmonary cryptococcosis including meningitis
Disseminated nontuberculous mycobacterial infection
Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy

Chronic cryptosporidiosis (with diarrhea)
Chronic isosporiasis
Disseminated mycosis (coccidioidomycosis or histoplasmosis)
Recurrent nontyphoidal *Salmonella* bacteremia
Lymphoma (cerebral or B-cell non-Hodgkin) or other solid HIV-associated tumors
Invasive cervical carcinoma
Atypical disseminated leishmaniasis
Symptomatic HIV-associated nephropathy or symptomatic HIV-associated cardiomyopathy

^aUnexplained refers to when the condition is not explained by other causes.

^bSome additional specific conditions can also be included in regional classifications (such as reactivation of American trypanosomiasis [meningoencephalitis and/or myocarditis] in the World Health Organization region of the Americas and disseminated penicilliosis in Asia).

even following ART initiation (e.g., cardiovascular disease, dyslipidemia, hypercoagulability, other metabolic disorders); and (3) opportunistic diseases resulting from impaired host responses as the cellular immune system is damaged or ablated. The major clinical syndromes most frequently seen in HIV-infected individuals fall into the last category. Potent ART has added two new categories of clinical manifestations that may be commonly encountered in patients with HIV infection: (1) immune reconstitution syndromes with exacerbations of previously silent or adequately treated infections, especially mycobacterial infections,^{73,74} and (2) a syndrome of lipodystrophy with fat loss and redistribution, elevated serum triglyceride and cholesterol levels, and insulin resistance seen in patients receiving ART, especially with protease inhibitors.^{75,76} The clinical features of immune reconstitution syndromes

are discussed later in this chapter, and the manifestations of drug toxicity related to the treatment of HIV are discussed in Chapter 128.

Although the clinical manifestations of HIV infection do not vary according to HIV subtype, the incidence of specific opportunistic infections is profoundly influenced by geography and the prevalence of infectious diseases in particular regions. HIV-1 infection increases susceptibility to tuberculosis, and the incidence of tuberculosis in HIV-infected individuals is extremely high in sub-Saharan Africa, where tuberculosis is endemic. In this setting, tuberculosis is the most common opportunistic infection in people with HIV infection and the leading cause of death. Approximately 22% of all deaths from tuberculosis worldwide are associated with HIV disease, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa.⁷⁷ Malaria is also endemic in many developing countries and occurs with increased frequency and severity in HIV-infected individuals, particularly during pregnancy.⁷⁸ Opportunistic infections such as *P. jirovecii* pneumonia, *M. avium* complex disease, CMV retinitis, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and HIV encephalopathy, which are relatively common in developed countries, are uncommon in developing countries such as those in West Africa.⁷⁹ In regions where it is endemic (e.g., the Mediterranean, Central America, South America, Africa, and Asia), leishmaniasis occurs with increased frequency among HIV-infected individuals. Similarly, *Trypanosoma cruzi* (South America), histoplasmosis (Ohio and Mississippi river valleys), and *Talaromyces marneffeii* (Thailand, China, Hong Kong) occur with increased frequency in certain regions.

The incidence of specific opportunistic diseases has been determined for several large cohorts of HIV-infected patients. In a cohort of more than 1200 patients with CD4⁺ counts less than 300 cells/mm³ before the availability of ART, the most common opportunistic infection was *Candida* esophagitis (13.3 cases per 100 person-years). *P. jirovecii* pneumonia, disseminated *M. avium* complex, CMV disease, and AIDS dementia complex occurred at rates of 5 to 9 cases per 100 person-years. The relatively lower incidence of *P. jirovecii* pneumonia reflects the use of specific prophylaxis with trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole or aerosolized pentamidine, which dramatically lowers the risk for this infection even in the absence of ART.^{80,81} Less common were toxoplasmosis, cryptococcal meningitis, herpes zoster, the wasting syndrome, and Kaposi sarcoma (2–4 cases per 100 person-years). The least common complications were non-Hodgkin lymphoma, tuberculosis, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy, and cryptosporidiosis (1–2 cases per 100 person-years). Similar results have been found in other cohorts of patients in developed countries.⁸² Considerably less information is available on the natural history of HIV infection in developing countries, but the spectrum of disease in patients presenting with HIV-related illnesses is different, with tuberculosis, cryptococcosis, bacterial sepsis and pneumonia, herpes zoster, and gastroenteritis predominating.⁸³

Early clinical findings may also predict disease progression in HIV-infected individuals who have not developed opportunistic disease. Oral candidiasis and oral hairy leukoplakia are markers of immunosuppression and herald the development of AIDS in many patients.^{43,84,85} Generalized lymphadenopathy is a common clinical finding in early HIV infection but does not predict progression to AIDS.⁸⁶ The occurrence of an opportunistic disease increases the risk for death independently of the CD4⁺ cell count^{87,88} including death due to non-AIDS-related causes.⁸⁹ This may be caused not only by morbidity related to the complication itself but also by an increase in immune activation and inflammatory responses leading to upregulation of HIV replication, with acceleration of HIV disease progression. A number of studies have demonstrated increases in HIV viral load in patients with acute opportunistic infections.^{90–93} Although viral load generally decreases after the acute illness, it generally does not return to premorbid levels.

Effect of Antiretroviral Therapy on Natural History of HIV Infection

Even before the era of effective combination ART, it was clear that nonsuppressive ART and prophylaxis against *P. jirovecii* pneumonia had substantially altered the natural history of AIDS, prolonging the median survival of treated patients with AIDS to 2 to 3 years.^{94–98} ART and prophylaxis against *P. jirovecii* pneumonia and *M. avium* complex prolonged the time from HIV infection to AIDS, decreased the incidence of opportunistic complications, and improved overall survival.^{99–106}

TABLE 122.7 Comparison of World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Staging Systems

WHO STAGE ^B	WHO T-LYMPHOCYTE COUNT AND PERCENTAGE ^C	CDC STAGE ^D	CDC T-LYMPHOCYTE COUNT AND PERCENTAGE
Stage 1 (HIV infection)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of ≥ 500 cells/mm ³	Stage 1 (HIV infection)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of ≥ 500 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of ≥ 29
Stage 2 (HIV infection)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of 350–499 cells/mm ³	Stage 2 (HIV infection)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of 200–499 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of 14–28
Stage 3 (advanced HIV disease)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of 200–349 cells/mm ³	Stage 2 (HIV infection)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of 200–499 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of 14–28
Stage 4 (AIDS)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of <200 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of <15	Stage 3 (AIDS)	CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte count of <200 cells/mm ³ or CD4 ⁺ T-lymphocyte percentage of <14

^AFor reporting purposes only.

^BAmong adults and children ≥ 5 years of age.

^CPercentage applicable for stage 4 only.

^DAmong adults and adolescents (≥ 13 years of age). CDC also includes a fourth stage, stage unknown; laboratory confirmation of HIV infection but no information on CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte count or percentage and no information on AIDS-defining conditions. CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; WHO, World Health Organization.

Changes in plasma HIV-1 RNA and CD4⁺ lymphocyte counts resulting from ART have been shown to be strong predictors of clinical regression of HIV disease and restoration of cellular immunity.^{107–109}

The use of combination ART and the introduction of protease inhibitors in the mid-1990s led to dramatic changes in the natural history of treated HIV disease (Figs. 122.3, 122.4, and 122.5).^{110–115} In the United States as a whole, deaths attributed to AIDS have decreased by 85% since peaking at approximately 50,000 in 1995 to approximately 6700 in 2014.^{111,112,116} Studies among cohorts of HIV-infected individuals in multiple settings demonstrate the beneficial effect of ART on clinical disease progression and death (Fig. 122.6).¹¹⁷ Global improvements in survival of people with HIV infection have now been documented as a result of the expansion of access to ART to almost 20 million people worldwide through efforts of initiatives such as the US President's Emergency Program for AIDS Relief and the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria as well as efforts by national governments to scale up treatment of HIV infection. According to UNAIDS, deaths from AIDS decreased by almost half between 2005 and 2016, from 1.9 million to 1.0 million.^{118–120} As discussed later on, as deaths due to AIDS have dramatically declined, morbidity and mortality in people with HIV infection is now more frequently caused by chronic diseases not traditionally classified as related to HIV infection. In the HIV Outpatient Study cohort, for example, declines in AIDS-related mortality between 1997 and 2004 were accompanied by a relative increase in deaths due to non-AIDS-related causes such as liver disease, non-AIDS-related cancers, and cardiovascular disease.¹¹⁴ The Antiretroviral Therapy Cohort Collaboration reported that among more than 1800 deaths in 13 HIV clinical cohorts that occurred between 1996 and 2006, about half were due to AIDS, and the remainder were due to non-AIDS-related cancers, cardiovascular disease, trauma, liver disease, and other causes; the rate of AIDS-related deaths fell steadily with increased time on ART.¹²¹ In the United States in 2014, almost half of deaths in people with HIV were attributed to non-AIDS-related causes. Among non-AIDS-related causes of death in Europe, non-AIDS-defining cancers were the leading cause.¹²²

Effective therapy has not only decreased the incidence of new opportunistic infections but has also led to resolution of preexisting conditions.¹²³ In some cases the immune restoration resulting from ART can alter the clinical presentation of specific opportunistic infections, as in the case of focal mycobacterial lymphadenitis or CMV vitritis.¹²⁴ It may also unmask opportunistic infections that were not evident before ART initiation such as tuberculosis.^{125,126} It is becoming increasingly clear that the immunologic changes resulting from ART represent at least a partial immune reconstitution, although the recovery of antigen-specific immunity appears to lag behind CD4⁺ cell count increases.^{127–130} The clinical manifestations of immune reconstitution syndromes are discussed at the end of this chapter. The incidence of new opportunistic infections in patients who have had satisfactory virologic and immunologic responses to ART is extremely low, even when primary prophylaxis has

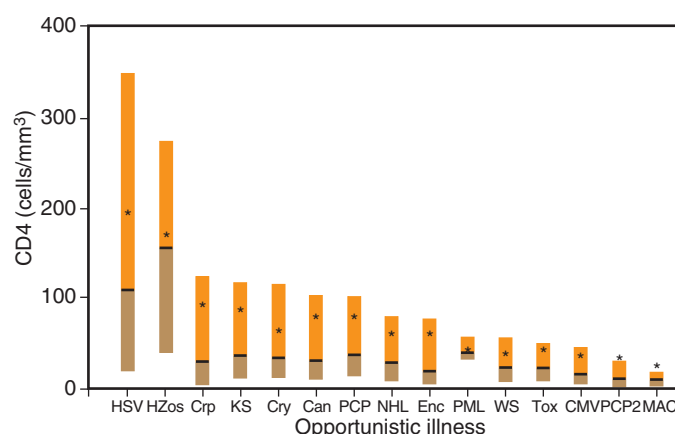


FIG. 122.3 Range of CD4⁺ lymphocyte counts at the time of diagnosis of opportunistic diseases in HIV-infected patients. Boxes represent the 25th to 75th percentiles, bars represent medians, and asterisks represent means. Can, *Candida* esophagitis; CMV, cytomegalovirus; Crp, cryptosporidiosis; Cry, cryptococcosis; Enc, HIV encephalopathy; HSV, herpes simplex virus; HZos, herpes zoster; KS, Kaposi sarcoma; MAC, *Mycobacterium avium* complex; NHL, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; PCP, first episodes of *Pneumocystis jirovecii* pneumonia; PCP2, recurrent *P. jirovecii* pneumonia; PML, progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy; Tox, toxoplasmosis; WS, wasting syndrome. (From Moore RD, Chaisson RE. Natural history of opportunistic disease in an HIV-infected urban cohort. *Ann Intern Med.* 1996;124:633–642.)

been discontinued.^{131,132} Moreover, reactivation of previously diagnosed opportunistic infections such as *M. avium* complex infections and CMV retinitis appears to be uncommon in patients with immune recovery who discontinue maintenance therapy.^{133,134}

Over the past 4 decades, the natural history of HIV infection and our understanding of it have undergone considerable change. The clinical course of HIV disease in patients receiving ART is likely to evolve further in the coming years, with additional manifestations and complications of long-standing infection and use of antiretroviral drugs becoming apparent as larger numbers of patients are treated for longer periods of time.

Acute Retroviral Syndrome

The initial manifestation of HIV infection in one-half to three-quarters of recently infected individuals is a mononucleosis-like illness referred to as acute retroviral syndrome. Whereas the first reports noted a high prevalence of symptoms in acutely infected men,^{135,136} other studies have found a wide range of symptomatic acute HIV infections.^{137–139} In one study of 378 subjects with acute retroviral syndrome, injection drug users had or reported symptoms less frequently than persons who

acquired HIV through sexual transmission.¹⁴⁰ Most health care workers with occupationally acquired HIV had acute retroviral syndrome after exposure.^{141,142} A recent intensive study of blood donors in Thailand reported that 78% of 430 adults diagnosed before HIV antibody seroconversion had symptoms of acute retroviral syndrome.

The clinical features of acute retroviral syndrome are nonspecific and variable.^{143–148} The onset of the illness ranges from 1 to 6 weeks after exposure to the virus but peaks at 3 weeks. Table 122.1 lists the

signs and symptoms of acute retroviral syndrome reported in 209 cases.¹⁴⁶ Fever, sweats, malaise, myalgias, anorexia, nausea, diarrhea, and a nonexudative pharyngitis are prominent symptoms.^{146–153} Many patients report headaches, photophobia, and meningismus. Two-thirds of patients may have a truncal exanthem that may be maculopapular, roseola-like, or urticarial. Findings of skin biopsies are nonspecific, with perivascular

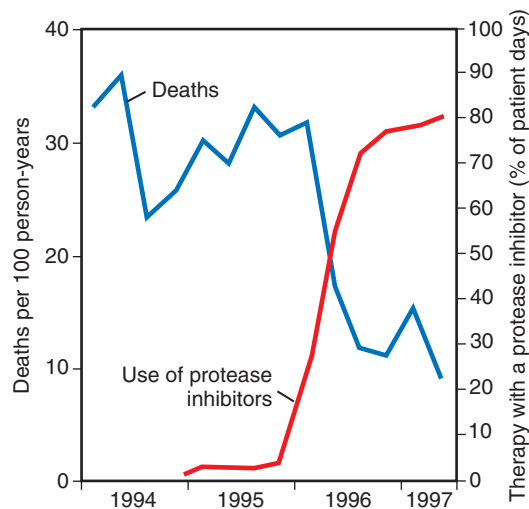


FIG. 122.4 Incidence of death and use of protease inhibitors in HIV-infected patients and CD4⁺ count lower than 100 cells/mm³ in the HIV Outpatient Study. (From Palella FJ, Delaney KM, Moorman AC, et al. Declining morbidity and mortality among patients with advanced human immunodeficiency virus infection. *N Engl J Med.* 1998;338:853–860. © 1998 Massachusetts Medical Society.)

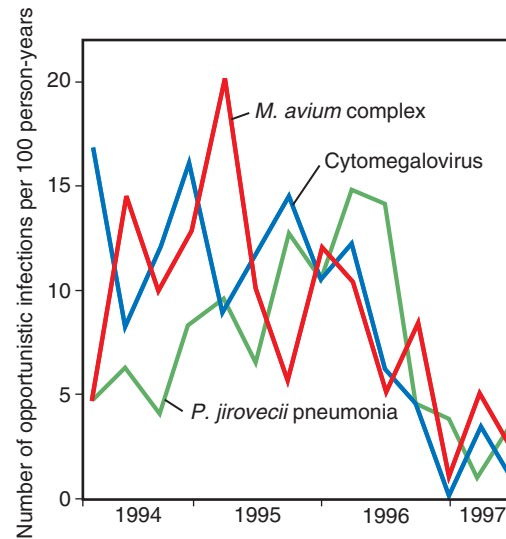


FIG. 122.5 Incidence of selected opportunistic infections in HIV-infected patients and CD4⁺ count lower than 100 cells/mm³ in the HIV Outpatient Study in the era before and after the introduction of protease inhibitors. (From Palella FJ, Delaney KM, Moorman AC, et al. Declining morbidity and mortality among patients with advanced human immunodeficiency virus infection. *N Engl J Med.* 1998;338:853–860. © 1998 Massachusetts Medical Society.)

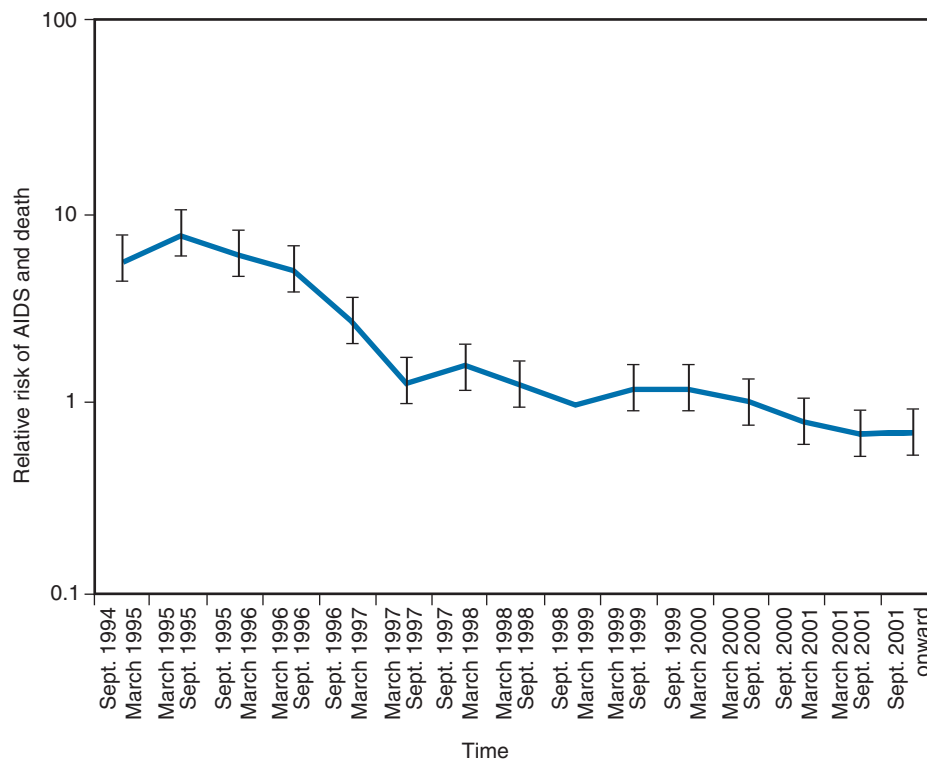


FIG. 122.6 Relative risk of AIDS or death since the introduction of antiretroviral therapy (ART) adjusted for CD4⁺ count at recruitment, age, previous ART treatment, and AIDS status. Data are from 9803 HIV-infected patients seen at 70 treatment centers in Europe, Israel, and Argentina. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. (From Mocroft A, Ledergerber B, Katlama C, et al. Decline in the AIDS and death rates in the EuroSIDA study: an observational study. *Lancet.* 2003;362:22–29.)



FIG. 122.7 Aphthous ulcer. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)

lymphocytic infiltrates and dermal mononuclear cell infiltrates.¹⁵⁴ In addition to aseptic meningitis, neurologic symptoms occur in a minority of patients and may include encephalitis, peripheral neuropathy, and an acute ascending polyneuropathy (Guillain-Barré syndrome).¹⁵⁵ Physical examination frequently reveals cervical, occipital, or axillary lymphadenopathy; rash; and, less commonly, hepatosplenomegaly. Oral aphthous ulcerations (Fig. 122.7) have been reported in several cases; these may involve the esophagus. Oral and esophageal candidiasis during the seroconversion illness has been reported. Symptoms generally resolve in 10 to 15 days. A wide range of acute opportunistic infections have been reported in patients with acute retroviral syndrome including *P. jirovecii* pneumonia, cryptococcal meningitis, and *Candida* esophagitis. Their occurrence is probably due to the depression of the CD4⁺ cell count that generally accompanies acute HIV infection.

Laboratory evaluation of patients with acute retroviral syndrome shows a reduced total lymphocyte count, elevated sedimentation rate, negative heterophil antibody test, and elevated aminotransferase and alkaline phosphatase levels.¹⁴⁶ When lymphocyte phenotyping is performed, a characteristic pattern is observed.¹⁵⁶ Initially the total lymphocyte count including both CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T lymphocytes decreases with a normal CD4⁺/CD8⁺ ratio. Within several weeks the CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ cell populations both begin to increase. The rise in CD8⁺ cell numbers is relatively greater than the rise in CD4⁺ cells, and the CD4⁺/CD8⁺ ratio is inverted. In the weeks that follow the CD8⁺ cell population increases markedly because of HIV-specific CD8⁺ T lymphocytes. The CD4⁺/CD8⁺ ratio usually remains inverted as the acute illness resolves, primarily because of excess numbers of CD8⁺ cells. In patients with neurologic symptoms the cerebrospinal fluid may show a lymphocytic pleocytosis with normal levels of protein and glucose.¹⁵⁷

Tests for detecting acute HIV infection include plasma HIV RNA, which becomes positive about 5 days after infection, and HIV p24 antigen, which may be detected after 10 days; antibody reactivity on enzyme immunoassay testing is not found until 14 to 21 days.¹⁵⁸ Fiebig and colleagues¹⁵⁸ characterized the stages of acute HIV infection by the timing of the appearance of viral markers and immune responses in plasma donors who were seroconverting. In Fiebig stage 1 (3–8 days), HIV-1 RNA is detectable, but p24 antigen and anti-HIV antibodies cannot be detected. Stage 2 (4–8 days) is marked by the appearance of p24 antigen in blood and cerebrospinal fluid. Stage 3 is marked by detection of anti-HIV antibodies by sensitive enzyme immunoassay, stage 4 is marked by the first appearance of bands on a Western blot, and stage 5 is marked by conversion of the Western blot to positive on multiple bands.^{157,158} The cumulative time of Western blot seroconversion ranges from 15 to 28 days. Use of a fourth-generation, ultrasensitive enzyme immunoassay shortens the time to detection of antibodies.¹⁵⁹ Therefore plasma HIV RNA is the most sensitive marker for acute HIV infection and is the preferred test when evaluating patients suspected to have acute retroviral syndrome.¹⁶⁰ Typical RNA levels range from 10⁵ to more than 10⁶ copies/mL of plasma, and the titers decline as the CD8⁺ cytotoxic T-cell and antibody responses subsequently increase.

Low-level (<10⁴) false-positive HIV RNA tests may occur, but high-level viremia is diagnostic of acute infection in the absence of anti-HIV antibodies.

The differential diagnosis of acute retroviral syndrome includes a number of other illnesses—infectious mononucleosis and other viral infections such as influenza, viral hepatitis, measles, rubella, primary herpes simplex virus (HSV) infection, and CMV and secondary syphilis. Evaluation of patients presenting with an illness consistent with acute retroviral infection should include a careful history to elicit risks for HIV infection; laboratory tests to rule out mononucleosis, CMV, and syphilis; HIV antibody and plasma RNA tests; and complete blood cell counts and differential. There is potential benefit in treating acute HIV with ART because there is evidence that this may lower the viral setpoint, lead to enhanced CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ HIV-specific responses, decrease the severity of acute disease,^{161,162} and decrease levels of immune activation and inflammation.¹⁶³ Early treatment does not appear to prevent establishment of reservoirs of latently infected resting CD4⁺ cells, although it may decrease the size of the reservoirs in adults.¹⁶⁴ In infants, very early treatment may result in remission of HIV viremia following cessation of treatment for several years, as illustrated by the “Mississippi Child.”¹⁶⁵ However, the remission of viremia is not permanent.¹⁶⁶ Current guidelines recommend ART for all HIV-infected individuals; thus initiating treatment in early HIV infection (the day of HIV diagnosis if resources and support are available) is appropriate (see Chapter 128).^{167–169}

Persistent Generalized Lymphadenopathy

Infection with HIV is associated with a high prevalence of persistent generalized lymphadenopathy (PGL), often beginning with acute retroviral syndrome. In the early 1980s, PGL was recognized as a prodromal state to the development of AIDS in MSM who were otherwise healthy.^{15,17} The pathogenesis of PGL is related to the rapid infection of CD4⁺ cells in lymph nodes by HIV after initial infection. Although enlarged peripheral lymph nodes may be the most evident sign of recent HIV infection, intestinal lymph nodes and Peyer patches in the gut are an even more important target of early HIV infection with infection of large proportions of CD4⁺ T cells and dendritic cells resulting in obliteration of normal nodal architecture and loss of function. Disruption of the intestinal mucosa can then lead to bacterial translocation and systemic immune activation, a process that may persist throughout the course of infection.^{170,171}

The syndrome of PGL is defined as the presence of two or more extrainguinal sites of lymphadenopathy for a minimum of 3 to 6 months for which no other explanation can be found. Biopsy specimens of lymph nodes from such patients usually reveal a follicular hyperplasia without specific pathogens. PGL develops in 50% to 70% of HIV-infected individuals. The most frequently involved node groups are the posterior and anterior cervical, submandibular, occipital, and axillary chains; epitrochlear and femoral nodes may also be enlarged. Physical examination usually reveals symmetrical, mobile, rubbery lymph nodes ranging from 0.5 to 2 cm. Localized (i.e., asymmetrical) adenopathy and rapid nodal enlargement are not characteristic and suggest another infectious or malignant process. Mediastinal and hilar adenopathy is not characteristic of the syndrome; however, abdominal computed tomography often reveals enlarged mesenteric and retroperitoneal adenopathy in patients with HIV infection. The natural history of HIV infection in patients with PGL does not differ significantly from that of HIV infection in patients without PGL.^{86,172} Involution of enlarged lymph nodes, with degeneration of follicular germinal centers and loss of hyperplasia, often accompanies progression of HIV infection to advanced disease.

In patients treated with ART, previously involuted lymph nodes may again enlarge as HIV-specific and other T cells are replenished. In addition, focal lymphadenitis with constitutional symptoms may occur in patients with previously silent infections 1 to 2 months after starting ART. These reversal or unmasking reactions, or immune reconstitution syndromes, are reminiscent of reversal reactions seen in multibacillary forms of leprosy, heralding a return of pathogen-specific T-cell responses.

The differential diagnosis of PGL includes HIV infection and a wide variety of other processes associated with generalized lymphadenopathy such as sarcoid, secondary syphilis, and Hodgkin disease. In patients with

HIV infection, lymphadenopathy may also be caused by mycobacterial infections, Kaposi sarcoma, and lymphoma.¹⁷³ An uncommon cause of lymphadenopathy in patients with HIV infection is multicentric Castleman disease.^{174,175} Castleman disease is an angioproliferative, hyperplastic process of lymph nodes and other lymphoid tissues showing characteristic histologic findings, with either hyaline vascular or plasma cell variants. In patients with HIV in particular, multicentric Castleman disease is the most common presentation, with involvement of lymph nodes, liver, spleen, and other organs. Although the pathogenesis of Castleman disease is not fully understood, infection with Kaposi sarcoma–associated herpesvirus (human herpesvirus type 8) is believed to underlie a large proportion of cases. Nearly all patients who have HIV infection and Castleman disease are also infected with human herpesvirus type 8.^{176,177} In contrast to PGL, multicentric Castleman disease is associated with constitutional symptoms and multiple organ involvement in most patients with HIV infection. The diagnosis is established on histopathology. Treatment with the anti-CD20 monoclonal antibody rituximab, alone or in combination with chemotherapy such as liposomal doxorubicin, has led to an overall survival of >90% at 5 years.^{178,179}

Constitutional Disease and Wasting

HIV infection is often completely asymptomatic; however, some patients present with nonspecific constitutional symptoms in the months or years after primary infection but before opportunistic disease is diagnosed. Patients commonly report being easily fatigued and the need to reduce their normal activities. Debilitating fatigue is uncommon in the early years of infection. Low-grade fevers (temperature <38°C [100.4°F]), occasional night sweats, and intermittent diarrhea are also reported. Severe wasting, with loss of more than 10% of body weight, is generally a finding of advanced HIV disease. The exact incidence of constitutional symptoms, fatigue, and weight loss is not known, and the cause is varied and often multifactorial. The differential diagnosis of these findings includes intercurrent minor illnesses, endocrinologic abnormalities, anemia, and psychological or psychiatric disorders.

In African patients with HIV infection, a wasting illness termed *slim disease* has been described.¹⁸⁰ These patients have debilitating fatigue, fevers, sweats, protracted diarrhea, and severe weight loss. Opportunistic or conventional pathogens are not found, but the patients waste away and die of severe malnutrition and terminal secondary infections. This illness has been encountered in developed countries as well but far less commonly than in Africa—a pattern that suggests underdiagnosis of opportunistic diseases in Africa. Several studies of African patients with enteropathic slim disease found that most had enteric pathogens or microsporidia when a thorough evaluation was performed.^{181,182} In Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 37% of patients who died with a diagnosis of slim disease were found at autopsy to have disseminated tuberculosis,¹⁸³ and the presence of tuberculosis at autopsy was strongly associated with the degree of wasting.¹⁸⁴ The definition of wasting syndrome in the United States is the presence of unexplained constitutional disease for longer than 1 month with a temperature higher than 38.3°C (100.9°F), diarrhea, and loss of more than 10% of baseline body weight. A thorough evaluation to identify specific pathogens that would explain the symptoms and be amenable to treatment is essential before wasting syndrome is diagnosed, and usually a specific cause can be implicated.

In patients with more advanced HIV disease with high viral loads and severe depletion of CD4⁺ cells, constitutional disease (fatigue, weight loss, malaise, fever) usually heralds the onset of opportunistic infections or malignancies. In one study of HIV-infected outpatients with fever, a specific cause could be identified for 83%.¹⁸⁵ Common causes of fever in these patients included *P. jirovecii* pneumonia, *M. avium* complex bacteremia, catheter-related bacteremia, bacterial pneumonia, sinusitis, lymphoma, and drug reactions. Fever lasting longer than 2 weeks was more often associated with AIDS-defining illnesses.

Anxiety disorders and depression are common in patients with HIV infection,^{186–188} and studies have suggested an increased prevalence of affective disorders among HIV-infected individuals. Injection drug users, in particular, have a high prevalence of affective disorders that may result in somatic complaints. Moreover, the physical effects of opiates and withdrawal from stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines cause fatigue and other constitutional symptoms.

Metabolic and Endocrine Abnormalities

A number of metabolic and endocrinologic disturbances have been identified in patients with HIV infection.^{189–191} The pathogenesis of metabolic and endocrine dysfunction in people with HIV is thought to be multifactorial and may result from activation of proinflammatory cytokines and procoagulant mediators by HIV infection, T-cell activation resulting directly and indirectly from HIV, bacterial translocation due to intestinal mucosal disruption, and activation of other infectious agents such as CMV by HIV-induced immunodeficiency.¹⁹² The spectrum of complications appearing in ART-naïve patients differs from that seen in treated patients with viral suppression, and in the latter group, aging and lifestyle may contribute to some manifestations.

Hypogonadism, particularly depression of testosterone or dihydrotestosterone levels, has been reported in men and women with HIV infection and weight loss or wasting.^{193,194} Elevated levels of myostatin-immunoreactive protein, a muscle catabolic agent, have been found in men with HIV and wasting.¹⁹⁵ In most clinical studies, however, wasting has been found in association with decreased caloric intake, elevated catabolism caused by opportunistic infections, or chronic diarrhea.^{196–199} In advanced HIV, severe wasting, whatever the cause, is strongly associated with mortality risk.²⁰⁰ Weight loss has remained an important predictor of mortality even in the era of ART.²⁰¹

The prevalence of osteoporosis is more than three times greater in HIV-positive individuals than HIV-negative control subjects.²⁰² HIV-positive individuals are also at increased risk of bone fracture.²⁰³

In contrast to the wasting illness seen in patients with advanced untreated HIV infection, patients receiving ART may have lipid abnormalities including hypertriglyceridemia and high low-density lipoprotein cholesterol and low high-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels. They may also have lipodystrophy, obesity, and insulin resistance.^{76,204} These abnormalities are seen more commonly with protease inhibitor–based therapy, but they also occur with nonnucleoside reverse-transcriptase inhibitor therapy. Significant weight gain and diabetes mellitus have been reported in patients switching from efavirenz to integrase strand transfer inhibitors.^{205,206} The lipid and glucose abnormalities may contribute to an increased risk for cardiovascular disease including myocardial infarction.²⁰⁷ Recent abacavir use has been associated with an increased risk of myocardial infarction.²⁰⁸ In the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study, HIV-infected men on ART with suppressed viral loads were overall less likely to have good metabolic health,—a composite of normal blood pressure, serum triglycerides, serum cholesterol, fasting blood glucose, and waist circumference—than HIV-seronegative men. However, these differences were largely seen in nonobese men, although the prevalence of obesity was slightly lower in HIV-infected men.²⁰⁹

Oral Disease

Abnormalities of the oral cavity occur throughout the course of HIV infection. Primary HIV infection has been associated with severe aphthous stomatitis and with oropharyngeal and esophageal candidiasis. As the infection progresses and immunologic impairment proceeds, numerous oral complications arise. In the late stages of disease, oral manifestations are highly prevalent and frequently severe.^{210–212} A number of studies have demonstrated that the occurrence of oral lesions such as candidiasis and hairy leukoplakia is associated with an increased risk for progression to AIDS.^{213–215}

Oral Candidiasis

Candida infections of the hard and soft palates, buccal mucosa, tongue, pharynx, and hypopharynx are observed frequently. *Candida albicans* is the species most commonly identified, but *Candida tropicalis*, *Candida glabrata*, and *Candida krusei* infections also occur. Contrary to systemic *Candida* infections, which appear to result from defects in phagocyte function and number, mucosal *Candida* infections result from impaired cellular immunity. The incidence of candidiasis increases with progressive cellular immunodeficiency, particularly as CD4⁺ counts fall below 200 to 300 cells/mm³.²¹⁶

The most common form of candidiasis is thrush (pseudomembranous candidiasis). Characteristic cottage cheese plaques that can be removed with a tongue blade are seen on the soft palate, tonsils, and buccal mucosa (Fig. 122.8). Less often, thrush involves the lateral and posterior



FIG. 122.8 Oral candidiasis (thrush). (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)



FIG. 122.9 Angular cheilitis. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)

aspects of the tongue, the hard palate, and the hypopharynx. *Candida* infection can produce flat erythematous plaques distributed in the same way as the pseudomembranous form of the disease but without the characteristic white exudate. This atrophic form of candidiasis is underdiagnosed because many clinicians are unfamiliar with its appearance. Atrophic candidiasis of the tongue also occurs. Less frequently, *Candida* can cause a nonscrapeable white plaque similar to that seen in hairy leukoplakia (see next section). In contrast to the corrugated lesions and hairlike projections seen in oral hairy leukoplakia, candidal lesions are smooth. This hypertrophic form of disease may involve the lateral border of the tongue, palate, and buccal mucosa. *Candida* infection of the lateral lip (angular cheilitis) is another common complication. Angular cheilitis can cause pain, fissures, erythema, and difficulty opening the mouth (Fig. 122.9). Physical examination, wet mount preparation, and response to antifungal therapy establish the diagnosis.

The diagnosis of candidiasis is frequently made on the basis of physical examination alone. A potassium hydroxide preparation of scraped material from a plaque is diagnostic and can be performed easily in most clinical settings. Cultures for *Candida* are rarely necessary unless antimicrobial resistance is suspected in patients with thrush refractory to azole therapy. A biopsy specimen of oral lesions can be used to distinguish various forms of leukoplakia. A therapeutic trial of antifungal agents can also help establish a diagnosis.

Oral Hairy Leukoplakia

Oral hairy leukoplakia is a raised white lesion of the oral mucosa that is usually seen on the lateral margin of the tongue.²¹⁷ The frequency of

occurrence of oral hairy leukoplakia increases as the CD4⁺ count decreases.²¹⁶ Oral hairy leukoplakia appears to be caused by the replication of Epstein-Barr virus in the epithelium of keratinized cells on the surface of the tongue and buccal mucosa.²¹⁸ Other herpesviruses have also been isolated from cultures of biopsy specimens of lesions; however, their role in the pathogenesis of oral hairy leukoplakia is unclear. The diagnosis is established by visual inspection, failure to scrape off the lesion with a tongue blade, failure of the lesion to respond to antifungal therapy, and biopsy material or scrapings in which Epstein-Barr virus can be identified. Oral hairy leukoplakia is usually asymptomatic, although large lesions may impair taste, hinder eating, and cause discomfort. There is usually clinical improvement with ART.

Gingivitis and Periodontitis

Severe gingivitis (linear gingival erythema) and periodontitis (necrotizing ulcerative periodontitis) have been observed in patients with HIV disease.²¹⁹ The onset of symptoms is often insidious but may be abrupt. Pain is often severe; patients may note foul breath, bleeding gums, and loosening of teeth. Physical examination may reveal a bright red marginal line on the gingiva, necrosis and ulceration of interdental papillae, gingival erosion, exfoliation of enamel, and loose teeth. The cause of gingivitis and periodontitis is unclear. Cigarette smoking may be an important cofactor in the pathogenesis of periodontitis. Mixed cultures of aerobic and anaerobic flora have been obtained from gingival biopsy samples. More severe, ulcerating gingivitis can be caused by infections with gram-negative bacilli, particularly *Klebsiella pneumoniae* and *Enterobacter cloacae*. Infections tend to be chronic, but débridement, irrigation, and topical antiseptic agents or metronidazole therapy may control some cases.

Oral Ulcers

A number of ulcerative lesions may occur in the oral cavity of patients with HIV infection. HSV types 1 and 2 may cause primary or recurrent oral ulcers. These lesions generally appear as small smooth ulcers on an erythematous base on the lips, buccal mucosa, hard palate, or gums. The ulcers may be single or multiple and are often painful. Episodes may last for several weeks; acyclovir may be beneficial. CMV may rarely cause solitary large ulcers in patients with disseminated CMV infection. Aphthous stomatitis is manifested by single or multiple painful ulcers, often with exudate or necrosis, which may appear on the buccal and labial mucosa and lateral margin of the tongue (see Fig. 122.7). These ulcers do not occur more commonly than in HIV-seronegative individuals, but episodes are more severe and prolonged.²²⁰ The ulcers may be treated with topical corticosteroids or thalidomide if persistent.^{221–223} The cause of oral ulcers is best determined by biopsy and viral culture, although minor lesions may be observed without specific therapy in many cases. Several drugs including zalcitabine, zidovudine, and dapsone have been reported to cause oral and gastrointestinal ulcers.

Other Oral Lesions

The purple-red lesions of Kaposi sarcoma may occur at any site in the mouth, but the palate is most common. Lesions may become large and nodular. Non-Hodgkin lymphoma may arise in the mouth as a swelling or ulcers; biopsy is required for diagnosis. Oral warts caused by human papillomavirus infection may be seen, but they are not malignant precursors. Ketoconazole and zidovudine can cause brown oral pigmentation. Salivary glands such as the parotid gland may be enlarged by infiltration with CD8⁺ lymphocytes or benign lymphoepithelial cysts. These cysts often respond to ART.²²⁴

Musculoskeletal Complications

Polymyositis complicates HIV infection in a small number of patients and can occur at any stage of HIV infection.²²⁵ Clinical features include myalgias, weakness of the proximal muscles, muscle tenderness, wasting, and fatigue.²²⁶ Creatine kinase and other muscle enzyme concentrations are usually elevated, although they do not correlate with disease severity; electrophysiologic studies are consistent with a myopathy.^{227,228} Nucleoside reverse-transcriptase inhibitors have been associated with a polymyositis-like clinical picture in a small proportion of patients who receive these agents. Initially described with zidovudine, the mechanism of this

myopathy is inhibition of mitochondrial DNA polymerase, which is distinguished on electron microscopy by ragged myofibrils.²²⁹ Other nucleoside reverse-transcriptase inhibitors also can cause mitochondrial toxicity resulting in neuropathies, liver impairment, and lactic acidosis.²³⁰ The more recently developed agents in this class such as tenofovir, emtricitabine, and lamivudine are less likely to cause mitochondrial damage.

Pyomyositis has been reported in patients with advanced HIV. Skin flora, particularly *Staphylococcus aureus*, are usually recovered from wound cultures, and preexisting skin diseases such as prurigo nodularis are a risk factor.^{231,232}

Although rheumatologic findings in patients with HIV disease are not unusual, the extent to which HIV infection is associated with these disorders is not always clear. Defining a specific arthropathy caused by HIV is difficult because many patients with HIV infection are already at increased risk for inflammatory joint disease. For example, injection drug users may develop septic arthritis caused by pyogenic bacteria, particularly *S. aureus*. MSM may have an increased risk for gonococcal arthritis or postinfectious reactive arthritis (formerly Reiter syndrome) associated with genital or gastrointestinal tract infections. Immune complex deposition related to hepatitis B virus (HBV) or hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection may also be associated with arthritis in patients with HIV infection. Although some animal retroviruses are clearly associated with arthropathies, the situation with HIV remains unclear.

Osteopenia and avascular necrosis of bone occur at a higher frequency in HIV-infected individuals than in HIV-seronegative people in the general population,^{233–235} and the incidence of avascular necrosis appears to be increasing.²³⁶ Risk factors for avascular necrosis include corticosteroid therapy, lipid-lowering agents, and testosterone.²³⁵ Although avascular necrosis has been described in individuals receiving ART,²³⁷ such therapy does not appear to affect the risk for avascular necrosis.²³⁸ Bone mineral density decreases modestly shortly after ART initiation but does not appear to decrease with time on ART, and in some studies it has increased.²³³

Cutaneous Manifestations

Dermatologic consequences of HIV infection include primary cutaneous opportunistic infections and malignancies, which may also disseminate to the viscera, and systemic opportunistic diseases with skin involvement.^{239,240}

Viral Infections of the Skin and Mucous Membranes

A wide range of viruses involve the skin in immunosuppressed patients with HIV infection. The exanthem of acute HIV infection is an erythematous morbilliform eruption of the trunk and upper arms that occurs 2 to 4 weeks after infection and is usually associated with fever, headache, arthralgias, night sweats, pharyngitis, or thrush.^{136,241,242} The rash resolves within 5 to 7 days. HSV (see Chapter 135) frequently causes morbidity in patients with advanced HIV disease.²⁴³ Serology shows previous infection with HSV-2 in more than 90% of MSM with HIV infection; it is less prevalent in other groups. Although HSV-2 recurs frequently even in nonimmunosuppressed hosts, it recurs more frequently and for prolonged periods in patients with HIV infection. HSV-2, a common pathogen of the sacral root dermatomes, often causes outbreaks in the buttocks, perineum, scrotum (or vulva), and shaft and glans of the penis. Characteristic lesions of HSV appear first as painful erythematous papules; later, they vesiculate and ulcerate, and pustules may form. Chronic ulcers may become granulated, verrucous, or bloody (Fig. 122.10). Herpes simplex proctitis is associated with severe rectal pain, fever, tenesmus, and obstipation. External lesions may be absent, and the diagnosis is established by anoscopic or sigmoidoscopic examination and cultures. Giant perirectal ulcers and lesions at other sites that yield thymidine kinase-resistant strains of HSV-2 have occurred in patients who were previously treated with acyclovir. HSV infections are diagnosed by the typical appearance and distribution of the lesions, viral culture, or polymerase chain reaction assay. Tzanck preparations may show giant cells, which suggest HSV infection but generally have low sensitivity. Some physicians base diagnosis on how patients respond to an empirical trial of acyclovir. Orolabial HSV infections in HIV-infected patients



FIG. 122.10 Herpes simplex cheilitis. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)



FIG. 122.11 Herpes zoster in dermatomal distribution. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)

may be caused by HSV-1 or HSV-2. Although primary infections may occur after patients acquire HIV, recurrences are the more common manifestation of HSV infection. Often a prodrome of tingling and pain precedes the appearance of painful vesicles and ulcers. Lesions may be found on the lips, buccal mucosa, gingiva, soft palate, uvula, and tongue. HSV disease may recur chronically in patients with advanced immunosuppression.

Varicella-zoster virus (shingles) is often reactivated in patients with HIV infection (see Chapter 136),²⁴⁴ typically when the CD4⁺ count is 200 to 500 cells/mm³. There have been reports of herpes zoster after initiation of ART,²⁴⁵ suggesting a role of the host immune response in this clinical manifestation. Herpes zoster may occur early in the course of HIV infection, but the incidence in late HIV disease is 5% to 10% annually.^{238,246–249} Dermatomal outbreaks are most common, and a substantial proportion of patients may have several dermatomes involved (Fig. 122.11). Recurrent episodes at the same or different sites, chronic (nonremitting) zoster, and dissemination are often seen.²⁵⁰ Shingles is often characterized by radicular pain and itching several days before erythematous papules appear, and vesiculation occurs within several days. Lesions are often extremely pruritic, and excoriation with secondary bacterial infection commonly occurs. Over a period of 4 to 7 days, lesions form bullae and crusts and begin to heal, although some patients have chronic herpes zoster. Cranial and thoracic dermatomes, followed by lumbar and sacral roots, are most often involved. Outbreaks along the ophthalmic branch of the trigeminal nerve may result in corneal involvement and lead to scarring and opacification that impair vision. A substantial proportion of patients may experience postherpetic scarring and pain. In patients with HIV infection who acquire primary varicella (chickenpox), the acute infection may progress to a chronic form in weeks to months.

Despite the frequency of disseminated CMV disease in late-stage AIDS, cutaneous manifestations are unusual. However, vesicles, bullae,



FIG. 122.12 Molluscum contagiosum. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)



FIG. 122.13 Kaposi sarcoma. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)

and hyperpigmented indurated plaques all have been described. Infections with human papillomavirus, the causative agent of condylomata acuminata, are more prevalent in HIV-infected people than in the general population. In addition to genital lesions (see Chapter 143), warts are often seen in periungual locations, on the feet (plantar warts), and in bearded areas of the face.

Molluscum contagiosum, a cutaneous poxvirus infection, is seen more often in HIV-infected people than in other populations (see Chapter 133). Most patients have CD4⁺ counts less than 200 cells/mm³. The agent is transmitted by sexual or other close contact; reactivation of remote infection may cause outbreaks in immunosuppressed hosts. Molluscum lesions are small firm papules with a pearly white umbilicated surface distributed on the face, trunk, or genital areas. The lesions are usually painless and can be differentiated from herpetic lesions by the absence of erythema, smaller size, and resolution of lesions without ulcerating or crusting (Fig. 122.12). Biopsy may be necessary to exclude more serious causes of cutaneous lesions such as cryptococcosis, pyogenic granuloma, and basal cell carcinoma. Liquid nitrogen is used effectively to treat this condition. Lesions may also resolve after initiation of ART, with a resultant increase in CD4⁺ count.²⁵¹

Bacillary Angiomatosis

Bacillary angiomatosis is associated with cutaneous and visceral involvement that produces lesions characterized by vascular proliferation, hemorrhage, and necrosis.^{252–256} The disease was first described in 1983 in a patient with AIDS with subcutaneous nodules with vascular proliferation and evidence of bacterial involvement by electron microscopy.²⁵⁵ Subsequently the cause of bacillary angiomatosis was attributed to the organisms *Bartonella henselae* and *Bartonella quintana* (see Chapter 234). *B. henselae* infection has been associated with cat and flea exposure and *B. quintana* infection with low socioeconomic status, homelessness, and exposure to lice.²⁵⁷ *Bartonella* organisms have been cultured from skin lesions, blood, liver, bone, and other sites.^{252–254,256}

Patients with bacillary angiomatosis usually present with one or several cutaneous lesions, although disseminated disease is common. The typical skin lesions are purple-red nodules or plaques that can ulcerate and crust. Lesions may be mistaken for cutaneous Kaposi sarcoma, skin tags, or basal cell carcinoma. Visceral disease may include hepatitis (bacillary peliosis), splenic or osseous lesions, bacillemia, pneumonitis or, less often, involvement of other organs.²⁵⁸ Bacillary peliosis is a characteristic illness in which patients present with fever, right upper quadrant pain, hepatomegaly, and elevation of liver enzyme levels, particularly alkaline phosphatase.^{259,260} Imaging studies of the liver may reveal echogenic defects; histologically, lesions have a cystic appearance, with vascular proliferation, hemorrhage, and necrosis.

The diagnosis of bacillary angiomatosis is best made by biopsy of involved sites. Hematoxylin and eosin stains of biopsy specimens from skin lesions show proliferation of small blood vessels in the dermis or cutis, enlarged endothelial cells with abundant cytoplasm, and necrotic and granulomatous changes. Warthin-Starry stains show perivascular



FIG. 122.14 Seborrheic dermatitis. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)

accumulations of bacilli; these findings may be confirmed by electron microscopy, although this is not usually necessary. The diagnosis can also be established by culture of the organism in several special media or by detection of *Bartonella* DNA by polymerase chain reaction assay.²⁶¹ Serologic assays for anti-*Bartonella* antibodies are available through the Special Pathogens Branch of the CDC. The natural history of the infection in patients with HIV is for relapses to occur in the absence of prolonged therapy with erythromycin or doxycycline. Fluoroquinolones, other macrolides, and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole also have activity against *Bartonella*.

Kaposi Sarcoma

Kaposi sarcoma is a vascular neoplastic disorder that in the United States is seen predominantly in HIV-infected MSM. Human herpesvirus type 8, which is transmitted sexually, has been implicated in the pathogenesis of Kaposi sarcoma (see Chapter 140).^{226–265} Although Kaposi sarcoma also affects visceral organs, the characteristic findings are cutaneous red-purple nodules or plaques (Fig. 122.13). Sites commonly involved include the legs, feet, mucous membranes, hard palate, nose, trunk, and scalp.²⁶⁶ Lesions of Kaposi sarcoma are often difficult to distinguish from lesions of bacillary angiomatosis; biopsy is required for diagnosis.

Other Cutaneous Manifestations

Various other skin disorders have been described in patients with HIV infection. Seborrheic dermatitis, an inflammatory condition of sebaceous glands that may be associated with dermatophytic superinfection, is an early complication (Fig. 122.14). Erythema and scaling of midline areas of the forehead, face, and groin are typical findings. Psoriasis occurs in 5% of HIV-infected individuals, with scaly reddish plaques, onycholysis, nail pitting, and subungual hyperkeratosis. Associated psoriatic arthritis

occurs more frequently than in HIV-seronegative individuals with psoriasis. Tinea infections of the scalp, trunk, inguinal and perineal areas, extremities, and feet are also common. Onychomycoses, or fungal infections of the fingernails and toenails, are common, although usually asymptomatic, causing only cosmetic changes. Bacterial folliculitis may be localized or disseminated in patients with HIV infection, and relapses frequently occur. *S. aureus* is the most common causative pathogen. Community-acquired methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* skin infections occur with increasing frequency in HIV-infected patients; risk factors include high-risk sex, drug-using behavior, and environmental exposure, but not immune status.²⁶⁷ Eosinophilic folliculitis (Fig. 122.15) is an inflammatory condition associated with raised pruritic nodules with a pustular head on an erythematous base; it is similar to bacterial folliculitis. Biopsy specimens of these lesions reveal intense infiltration of eosinophils and absence of polymorphonuclear cells and organisms. Xerosis and ichthyosis are also common in patients with advanced HIV disease and may be refractory to therapy with emollients and antiinflammatory agents; antihistamines may provide symptomatic relief. Prurigo nodularis appears as nodules and papules caused by chronic rubbing and scratching. This is precipitated by one of the many causes of pruritus in HIV-infected patients, such as xerosis, eosinophilic folliculitis, and atopic dermatitis.

Disseminated cryptococcosis and histoplasmosis may cause mucocutaneous papules, nodules, pustules, or ulcers (Figs. 122.16 and 122.17). Biopsy and culture establish the diagnosis. Molluscum contagiosum can also cause small papules; the causative agent is molluscum contagiosum virus, a poxvirus. In Thailand and southern China, *T. marneffei* is a common opportunistic fungal infectious agent in patients with AIDS.²⁶⁸ Patients can present with umbilicated papules, subcutaneous nodules, or morbilliform eruptions. Diagnosis is established by identifying the ellipsoid organism with central septation and characteristic red

pigment production when grown in culture. Nontuberculous mycobacteria such as *M. avium* complex and *M. haemophilum* may cause cutaneous papules, pustules, abscesses, lymphadenitis, or ulcerations. Culture is required for diagnosis.

Scabies

Sarcoptes scabiei var. *humanus* is the mite responsible for scabies, a common ectoparasitic infestation, in HIV-infected individuals. Scaly pruritic papules or hyperkeratotic plaques may occur on the palms, soles, trunk, or extremities. Characteristic burrows between the fingers and on the wrists are not always seen. Norwegian (crusted) scabies (Fig. 122.18) is a severe and highly contagious manifestation of this disease, seen particularly with advanced immunosuppression.²⁶⁹ Permethrin 5% cream and ivermectin are effective therapies.²⁷⁰

Renal Disease

A number of renal abnormalities have been described in patients with HIV infection since early in the epidemic, and the spectrum of conditions recognized has expanded over time, as has our understanding of the pathogenesis of these disorders.²⁴⁷ Similar to metabolic disease, kidney dysfunction may result from direct effects of HIV itself, immune-mediated responses to HIV infection, opportunistic infections, and chronic inflammation in individuals successfully treated with ART. In addition, drug toxicity from antiretroviral agents and drugs used to treat opportunistic diseases and other complications is a major cause of renal problems in patients with HIV infection. Metabolic disorders such as



FIG. 122.15 Eosinophilic dermatitis. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)



FIG. 122.16 Cryptococcosis. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)



FIG. 122.17 Histoplasmosis. (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)



FIG. 122.18 Norwegian scabies (in a patient with wasting syndrome). (Courtesy Dr. Stephen Raffanti.)

diabetes and cardiovascular disease increase the risk of developing kidney damage as well, and risk factors for cardiovascular disease and chronic kidney disease are multiplicative.²⁷¹ Other conditions that mediate renal pathologic processes including injection drug use and HBV and HBC infection may also affect the kidneys.

Pentamidine, foscarnet, and the aminoglycosides can cause acute tubular necrosis, and indinavir, sulfadiazine, and intravenous acyclovir can cause intratubular obstruction by crystal formation. The widely used nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor tenofovir disoproxil fumarate (TDF) accumulates in renal tubular cells via active transport by organic anions and can cause tubular dysfunction including proteinuria, diabetes insipidus, acute tubular necrosis, and, unusually, Fanconi syndrome. Patients with a normal glomerular filtration rate at the onset of treatment with TDF experience modest declines in glomerular filtration rate over time but rarely progress to chronic kidney disease. Individuals with underlying kidney impairment or low body weight may have a marked loss of renal function after initiating TDF, and the drug is not recommended for patients with chronic kidney disease. A newer formulation of a tenofovir prodrug, tenofovir alafenamide (TAF), does not undergo organic anion transport and does not accumulate in renal tubular cells, although it does achieve higher intracellular concentrations in peripheral blood mononuclear cells. TAF had less nephrotoxicity in clinical trials and resulted in improvement in renal dysfunction in patients switched from TDF-containing regimens. TAF is now recommended to replace TDF in US and other treatment guidelines.¹⁶² Thrombotic microangiopathy and thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura/hemolytic-uremic syndrome have been reported in HIV-infected individuals and are associated with high HIV-1 viral loads and advanced immunosuppression. Hypertension may be a prominent feature, and the condition may respond to ART.²⁷² Immune complex-mediated glomerular diseases such as those associated with immunoglobulin A (IgA) nephropathy²⁷³ and HCV infection²⁷⁴ have also been reported.

The predisposition of patients of African descent to develop renal disease has been linked to polymorphisms in the *APOL1* apolipoprotein gene, which is hypothesized to have provided evolutionary protection against trypanosomal infections in Africa.^{275,276} Although a variety of renal pathologic processes occur in patients of all races, and chronic renal insufficiency due to a variety of causes is not uncommon, black patients develop end-stage renal disease (ESRD) considerably more often than white patients, a consequence of the *APOL1* polymorphisms.²⁷⁷ One study noted that more than 90% of patients with biopsy-proven HIV-associated nephropathy (HIVAN) had *APOL1* risk alleles. The pathogenesis of *APOL1*-associated nephropathies is not well understood but may involve changes in ion flux, mitochondrial dysfunction, and increases in inflammation.²⁷⁸

Manifestations of HIVAN include proteinuria, mildly elevated serum creatinine levels, and normal-sized echogenic kidneys on renal ultrasonography. Biopsy specimens show focal and segmental glomerulosclerosis on histopathology with glomerular injury, mesangial proliferation, tubular degeneration with microcyst formation, and capillary collapse.²⁷⁹ Patients usually have detectable HIV RNA in the plasma.^{279,280}

Renal dysfunction in patients with HIV disease is usually diagnosed incidentally when patients present with opportunistic infections and have a CD4⁺ count less than 200 cells/mm³.²⁸¹ Asymptomatic proteinuria, up to 5 g/day, is often the initial finding, and the serum creatinine level is often normal or only mildly elevated. The albumin concentration is almost always low, as is true for most patients with AIDS with opportunistic infections, and the blood pressure is usually normal. Renal biopsy most often shows focal and segmental glomerulosclerosis (collapsing glomerulosclerosis) with severe tubulointerstitial disease and proliferative microcyst formation. Immunofluorescence studies often reveal deposits of IgM and C3, and electron microscopy shows tubuloreticular inclusion bodies,²⁸¹ underscoring the association of this genetic association, but the presence of HIVAN in the small number of individuals without risk alleles indicates that other factors are also involved.^{282,283}

The clinical course of HIVAN progresses quickly, usually because many other opportunistic processes occur simultaneously.²⁸⁴ The optimal management for HIVAN includes rapid initiation of ART,^{285,286} short courses (8–12 weeks) of corticosteroids,²⁸⁷ and use of angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors for patients who can tolerate them.²⁸⁸

Immunosuppressive therapy with cyclosporine has been tried but is probably not superior to corticosteroid therapy.²⁸⁹

A recent large observational cohort study demonstrated that the risk of ESRD remains high among HIV-infected individuals but is declining with improvements in viral suppression.²⁹⁰ ESRD remains more frequent in black patients with HIV infection. Kidney transplantation to HIV-positive recipients appears to be feasible from HIV-negative as well as HIV-positive donors as long as viral suppression is maintained.^{291,292}

Ocular Complications

Ocular diseases are extremely common manifestations of HIV disease with a wide variety of causes ranging from a benign HIV retinopathy to sight-threatening viral opportunistic infections.^{293–295} As HIV disease progresses, the risk for ocular complications increases appreciably.

Before widespread initiation of ART, HIV retinopathy occurred in approximately one-third of all patients with HIV, with the prevalence higher in patients with low CD4⁺ counts. The most frequent finding is a cotton-wool spot, a small pale lesion that is thought to represent transient focal retinal ischemia. HIV retinopathy may also produce microaneurysms and retinal hemorrhages. The condition is generally benign, although some patients have developed visual defects attributed to this condition.

The most common and serious ocular complication of HIV disease is retinitis, most often caused by CMV (see Chapter 137). CMV is ubiquitous in patients with HIV infection and causes serious morbidity in patients with AIDS. CMV is transmitted by the same routes as HIV, and almost all patients with sexually acquired HIV infection are also infected with CMV. Similar to other herpesviruses, CMV may infect cells latently and be reactivated when host defenses are impaired. Asymptomatic CMV viremia and viremia may be found in one-third to one-half of patients with advanced HIV disease. The risk for CMV retinitis is determined largely by the CD4⁺ count and by the CMV DNA level in the peripheral blood. For patients with CD4⁺ counts less than 200 cells/mm³, the annual risk is 4% to 12%. Further risk stratification is aided by CMV DNA measurements, with aviremic patients having less than 1% risk per year, even at low CD4⁺ counts.²⁹⁶

CMV has a unique predilection for the retina, with 90% of end-organ disease in patients with HIV infection being retinitis.²⁹⁷ Other involved sites include the colon, esophagus, stomach, adrenals, pancreas, brain, and lungs. The onset of CMV retinitis may be insidious or rapid. Patients complain of painless, progressive visual loss, blurring, and floaters. CMV retinitis usually arises unilaterally, although it may subsequently progress to the contralateral retina. Funduscopic examination of the involved eye typically reveals coalescing white exudates in a vascular pattern, with surrounding hemorrhage and edema. Lesions are often peripheral initially, involve the fovea later, and result in visual loss. Retinal detachment may occur as a late complication.

The advent of ART has resulted in astonishing declines in the incidence of CMV retinitis. Several population-based studies have reported 60% to 90% reductions in the incidence of this disease. Improvement in cell-mediated immunity with ART results in suppression of CMV DNA in plasma, with a subsequent decrease in the risk for disease. It appears that patients with treated CMV retinitis who receive ART may safely discontinue anti-CMV therapy if their CD4⁺ count rises to more than 100 cells/mm³ for at least 3 to 6 months.^{298,299} For patients with CD4⁺ counts less than 50 cells/mm³, education regarding retinitis symptoms and regular ophthalmologic examinations are recommended. Patients complaining of ocular symptoms should undergo a thorough ophthalmologic examination. Retinal findings may include cotton-wool spots or lesions of infectious retinitis. Less common retinal infections include toxoplasmosis, pneumocystosis, varicella-zoster virus, and ocular syphilis, which is usually a diffuse intraocular process. Cotton-wool spots are prevalent in patients with AIDS but do not appear to predict the development of other retinal disease. The cotton-wool spots are distributed in a vascular pattern similar to that of CMV but do not have the irregular pattern of full retinal exudates and hemorrhages characteristic of CMV retinitis. An ophthalmologist or other highly trained observer should examine any patient with signs or symptoms of retinitis promptly because delay in therapy can result in irreversible visual loss. Cultures of the blood and urine yield CMV in 60% and

80% of cases, respectively, although the diagnosis rarely rests entirely on these results.

Patients who have had CMV retinitis frequently experience acute retinal detachment. Erosion of the retinal border at the site of a necrotic lesion allows the retina to be lifted off underlying tissues. Patients complain of sudden loss of vision (“like a curtain falling” in front of the affected eye). Surgical reattachment is often partially successful in restoring vision, although progressive visual loss may ensue. Treatment options include oral valganciclovir, intravenous ganciclovir, intravenous foscarnet, and intravenous cidofovir in combination with ART (see Chapter 137).²⁹⁸

Varicella-zoster retinitis is a severe necrotizing retinitis (progressive outer retinal necrosis) that may occur in patients with advanced HIV disease and low CD4⁺ cell counts, although some cases occur at earlier stages of HIV disease.³⁰⁰ Patients most often note rapid visual loss. Funduscopic findings include peripheral necrosis, occlusive vasculopathy, optic neuritis, and vitreal and scleral inflammation, and the syndrome is termed *acute retinal necrosis*. Varicella-zoster retinitis usually occurs in the absence of zoster at other sites, but a history of varicella-zoster virus disease is common, and the virus may be isolated from tissue samples in some patients.³⁰¹ Blindness ensues despite therapy in most patients, although responses to intravenous ganciclovir and foscarnet plus intravitreal injections of ganciclovir or foscarnet or both have been reported.²⁹⁸ Optimization of ART is also recommended.

Ocular toxoplasmosis occurs in patients with advanced immunodeficiency, and many, but not all, have cerebral toxoplasmosis. *Toxoplasma* retinitis is characterized by discrete, rounded, pale exudates. Lesions are usually discrete foci of retinal inflammation without hemorrhage or vasculopathy. Vitreal inflammation is common. The diagnosis is made by observation by an experienced ophthalmologist.

P. jirovecii may cause a choroiditis that mimics CMV retinitis.³⁰² The lesions are typically posterior, are yellow-orange, and do not cause vitreal inflammation. Choroidal pneumocystosis occurs most often in patients with previous *P. jirovecii* pneumonia, particularly in patients taking aerosolized pentamidine for prophylaxis.

Cardiac Manifestations

Early clinical observations suggested that HIV infection spared the heart, as memorialized in the activist/playwright Larry Kramer’s award-winning play *The Normal Heart*. Subsequent experience showed that cardiac involvement in HIV and AIDS is not unusual.^{303,304} Cardiac abnormalities in patients with HIV infection may include opportunistic infections or diseases of the myocardium (e.g., *T. gondii*, *Trypanosoma cruzi*) or pericardium (e.g., mycobacteria, Kaposi sarcoma), left ventricular dysfunction and dilated cardiomyopathy, cardiac autonomic abnormalities, and vascular heart disease such as pulmonary hypertension. Infectious endocarditis may also occur in patients with HIV infection, especially injection drug users, but there is little evidence to suggest that the risk is increased after accounting for behaviors. Marantic endocarditis is a manifestation of late-stage HIV disease and is sometimes noted at autopsy.

In patients with long-standing but treated HIV infection, accelerated atherosclerosis with myocardial infarction is increasingly common.²⁰⁷ Population-based studies have demonstrated that rates of myocardial infarction and cardiac death are increased in HIV-infected veterans compared with control subjects, and HIV-infected men in the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study have an increased prevalence of coronary calcification and total (but not calcified) coronary artery plaque than HIV-negative men.^{305,306} The risk for coronary disease is associated with age, duration of HIV infection, nadir CD4⁺ lymphocyte count, and duration of ART, suggesting in part that chronic immune activation plays a mechanistic role in the development of cardiac disease. This is consistent with the results of the Strategies for Management of Antiretroviral Therapy (SMART) study,³⁰⁷ in which patients randomly assigned to interrupted ART had increased rates of cardiac death, which was associated with elevations in proinflammatory cytokines and prothrombotic markers.

Myocardial disease in HIV-infected individuals is surprisingly common, particularly in late-stage disease. Infectious myocarditis has been reported with a number of opportunistic infections, notably *T. gondii*. In an autopsy-based study in France, for example, 12% of patients

with AIDS who died were found to have cardiac toxoplasmosis.³⁰⁸ Most patients with cardiac toxoplasmosis also had cerebral involvement, although several patients had isolated toxoplasmic myocarditis. Myocarditis may be seen in acute *T. gondii* infection, and coincident toxoplasmic pneumonitis may present a clinical picture of diffuse pulmonary infiltrates and cardiac insufficiency. Other opportunistic agents causing myocardial involvement include mycobacteria and fungi.

A more common and underdiagnosed disorder in HIV-infected individuals is cardiomyopathy with left ventricular dysfunction, which may result in congestive heart failure.³⁰⁹ Several large cohort studies in the pre-ART era found that 8% to 12% of patients with HIV infection had echocardiographic evidence of left ventricular dysfunction, and the incidence of dilated cardiomyopathy with severe congestive heart failure (New York Heart Association class III or IV) was 15% to 18% per year.^{310,311} Clinical evaluation of patients may reveal only complaints of fatigue and exertional dyspnea, and physical examination may show tachycardia without rales or overt signs of congestive heart failure. Echocardiography shows global hypokinesis and enlargement of all four chambers, with a modestly to severely reduced left ventricular ejection fraction and increased end-diastolic volume index. Chest radiography is frequently unhelpful. The cause of HIV-related cardiomyopathies is multifactorial, with conflicting data on the causative role of cardiotoxic viruses, vitamin deficiencies, and cardiotoxic drugs. However, there is compelling evidence that HIV itself is involved in the pathogenesis of cardiomyopathy in a large proportion of patients.^{310,311} HIV has been identified in myocardial tissue by in situ hybridization in several studies and found to be positive in one-third to two-thirds of patients with myocarditis. In addition, an inflammatory cellular infiltrate composed of major histocompatibility complex class I-expressing CD8⁺ cells is found in a large proportion of patients, suggesting an autoimmune mechanism in this process. Other viruses also implicated in dilated cardiomyopathy in patients with HIV infection include Epstein-Barr virus, coxsackieviruses, and CMV. Supportive treatment with digoxin, diuretics, and afterload reduction is usually of symptomatic benefit, and some patients with inflammatory myocarditis respond to corticosteroid therapy. Nonetheless, the prognosis for patients with this finding is poor,³¹² although combination ART might change this.

Pericardial effusions have been reported in varying proportions of patients in a number of studies, many of which have had selection bias as a limitation. In patients with more advanced illness in hospital-based settings, pericardial effusions can be common. For example, a Portuguese study found that 41% of 181 HIV-infected patients had pericardial effusions.³¹³ Most effusions in this setting are asymptomatic or arise with signs and symptoms of opportunistic disease at other sites. The causes of pericardial disease in patients with HIV infection are diverse, but opportunistic infections and malignancies are the agents most commonly implicated. Mycobacterial infections, especially tuberculosis, are frequently associated with pericardial involvement in areas in which coinfection with HIV and *M. tuberculosis* is common, and nontuberculous mycobacteria may also invade the pericardial space. Other infections seen in the pericardium include bacterial infections, fungal infections (e.g., *Cryptococcus*), and viral cardiopulmonary infections. Kaposi sarcoma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma may also cause pericardial effusion. Cardiac tamponade or cardiac dysfunction resulting from effusions is unusual in most series, and in most cases pericardiocentesis is not necessary as a therapeutic maneuver. One study, however, reported that 40% of patients with an HIV-related pericardial effusion had signs of tamponade.³¹⁴

Hematologic Manifestations

HIV infection can affect all three hematologic cell lines—leukocytes, red blood cells, and platelets. Although neutropenia and anemia are seen primarily in advanced disease, thrombocytopenia can occur in early-stage disease (e.g., HIV-related thrombocytopenia) or late-stage disease (thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura). Neutropenia may be caused by HIV infection itself or may be an adverse effect of therapy. In one study, neutropenia was an independent risk factor for bacterial infection after controlling for CD4⁺ count.³¹⁵ In another study of 71 patients with an absolute neutrophil count less than 1000 cells/mm³ for a median of 13 days, only 6 (8%) developed culture-proven infection.³¹⁶