Biobehavioral and Neurobehavioral Processes in the HIV–Mental Health Interaction

Guest Editors: Adam Carrico, PhD; Leah Rubin, PhD, MPH; and Robert Paul, PhD

The overarching goal of this special issue is to advance understanding of biobehavioral and neurobehavioral processes linking mental health disorders and HIV, particularly among those receiving effective anti-retroviral therapy (ART).

In the modern ART era, the number of people with HIV (PWH) who maintain an undetectable viral load has increased substantially. However, PWH receiving effective ART often continue to display residual immune dysregulation and frequently present with other medical comorbidities such as cardiometabolic alterations. These factors can have important neuropsychiatric and other mental health-related consequences. The potential clinical relevance of the biological processes in PWH receiving ART is supported by estimates that one-third of individuals in whom ART is effective have a depressive disorder. Research is therefore needed to elucidate the bio-behavioral and neurobehavioral mechanisms that increase risk for mental health disorders among PWH.

In addition to the biological alterations related to HIV, stigma and other psychosocial stressors could alter the neuroendocrine stress response, amplify residual immune dysregulation, and potentiate faster clinical HIV disease progression. There is increasing recognition that many PWH experience stigma related to race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual minority status in addition to the stigma of living with HIV that could alter bio-behavioral pathways relevant to health outcomes. Although stress and depression have been previously linked to accelerated clinical HIV disease progression, important questions remain regarding the relevance of these findings in the modern ART era. Further research is needed to elucidate the pathways whereby intersectional stigma and stress could increase risk for mental health disorders and clinical HIV progression.

The Guest Editors of this special-themed issue are: Dr. Adam Carrico, Professor of Public Health Sciences and Psychology, University of Miami; Dr. Leah Rubin, Associate Professor of Neurology and Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins University; and Dr. Robert Paul, Professor of Behavioral Neuroscience, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

Potential topics of the manuscripts submitted to this Special Issue include:

- Biobehavioral and neurobehavioral mechanisms (e.g., neuroinflammation, microbiome-gut-brain axis) that underlie greater risk of mental health disorders in PWH
- Biobehavioral and neurobehavioral pathways whereby exposure to stigma related to HIV, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual minority status, or intersectional identities could increase risk for mental health disorders in PWH
- Studies examining the relevance of medical comorbidities (e.g., cardiometabolic alterations) as important determinants of increased risk for mental health disorders in PWH

If you are interested in submitting a manuscript for consideration as part of this special issue, we encourage you to submit a preliminary abstract by June 15, 2021 at this link. The abstract should be no more than 250 words and be formatted for Psychosomatic Medicine. Authors of selected abstracts will
be invited to submit a manuscript for full consideration as part of the special issue by June 30, 2021. Initial manuscript submissions will be due by August 15, 2021, and revised manuscripts will be due by December 15, 2021. For additional information about this Special Issue or other journal-related matters, please feel free to contact one of the Guest Editors or the journal’s editorial office at HIV_special_issue@psychosomaticmedicine.org.

We look forward to receiving your contributions to this exciting special issue.

Sincerely,

Adam Carrico, Leah Rubin, and Robert Paul
Guest Editors