

HIV Infection and People Over 50

POSITION STATEMENT

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2008

Approved by the Assembly, November 2008

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees... These are ...position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects..." -- *APA Operations Manual*.

Statistics show that new AIDS cases are rising faster in the over 50 population than in people under 40 years of age. We must take great effort in providing seniors with the education and treatment services they need to stay healthy.

1. Psychiatrists are encouraged to address sexual health and well being when performing a comprehensive evaluation of their older patients, including taking a sexual history, discussing the risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and offering information and prevention services to help protect against acquiring or transmitting HIV. A comprehensive evaluation and sexual history for the older population at risk for HIV includes the following areas: coerced and consensual acts; HIV-related risk behavior; reproductive plans; condom usage (male and female); history of prior STIs and HIV testing; assessment of risk for current STDs and HIV; and alcohol/drug use behaviors including injection drug use and the sharing of paraphernalia for such purposes.

2. Psychiatrists are encouraged to ensure that older populations who have severe and persistent mental illness or are psychiatrically hospitalized or committed to forensic services have access to HIV testing, pre- and post-test counseling, HIV education and prevention services and access to HIV treatment including antiretroviral medication for those who are HIV-infected.