National Institute on Drug Abuse:
Functional Limitation Measures among Women with HIV

This research advances disability prevention by identifying subgroups at highest risk of functional decline and disability, providing a benchmark for future evaluations, and informing prevention and treatment strategies for planning or modifying services.

Lead Agency:

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Agency Mission:

The NIDA mission is to lead the Nation in bringing the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction. This charge has two critical components. The first is the strategic support and conduct of research across a broad range of disciplines. The second is ensuring the rapid and effective dissemination and use of the results of that research to significantly improve prevention, treatment and policy as it relates to drug abuse and addiction.

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General Description:

Functional Limitation Measures among Women with HIV
The proposed study will characterize functional limitation and disability among a cohort of women infected with HIV, who are part of the Women's Interagency HIV Study (WIHS). The study is nested as a cross-sectional study within the prospective WIHS study. Functional limitation measures include indices of hand grip strength and timed–gait tests, while disability measures assess activities of daily living. Prevalence and severity are compared across groups of women according to HIV, HCV, and illicit drug use status. Women infected with HIV or HCV are also compared with uninfected WIHS participants and uninfected 'external' women from the Cardiovascular Health Study and the Women's Health and Aging Study. Epidemiologic associations will involve more than 3,000 WIHS women, representing the domestic epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in women. Logistic regression analyses will use HIV, HCV, drug use, and age-related predictors.

Excellence: What makes this project exceptional?

This study will provide vital, comprehensive data on the prevalence and severity of HIV- and HIV/HCV-coinfected women. Findings should help generate inferences about the etiology of particular disabilities and limitations.

Significance: How is this research relevant to older persons, populations and/or an aging society?

Given that more than 60,000 Americans aged 50 or older are living with HIV, attention to disability prompts studies that look at people's functioning in the presence of disease as health outcome rather than disease onset and mortality.

Effectiveness: What is the impact and/or application of this research to older persons?

This study helps to fill a critical gap in that data on the epidemiology of disability among older HIV- and HIV/HCV-coinfected women area particularly scarce.

Innovativeness: Why is this research exciting or newsworthy?

The study also takes advantage of other large data sets and promotes collaboration across disciplines.