

Coping with HIV Symptoms and Treatment Side Effects

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Project Description: People living with HIV face numerous challenges in health care decision-making. One major challenge is coping with symptoms and treatment side effects. There is not a clear understanding of how coping with treatment side effects differs from coping with HIV-related symptoms and how these processes relate to quality of life and medical decision making. This project proposes a conceptual model of medical decision-making based on stress and coping theory and incorporates research in the area of social problem solving, health beliefs, and personality. The project involves two studies that address the appraisal and coping processes involved and the associations with quality of life and medical decision making in the context of taking highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) for HIV. The specific aims are to:

- Describe the range of treatment side effects and HIV-related symptoms reported by a sample of HIV+ persons on HAART.
- Determine whether HIV+ persons on HAART make distinctions between side effects and symptoms and describe the process of making this distinction.
- Explore relationships among side effects and symptom appraisal and coping, quality of life, and medical decision making in a sample of HIV+ adults on HAART.

Johnson, M.O., Stallworth, T., & Neilands, T.B. (2003). The drugs or the disease? Causal Beliefs of Physical Problems Held by HIV Positive Adults on HAART. *AIDS and Behavior*, 7(2), 109-117.