

HIV TESTING AND HIV VACCINE RESEARCH

ADDRESSING CONCERNS AROUND FALSE DIAGNOSES

More than 30,000 people have participated in experimental HIV vaccine trials, helping us move closer to an effective vaccine. As someone who may treat current or former trial participants, there are some important things to know about HIV testing and experimental HIV vaccine recipients.

HIV vaccine trial participants can test antibody positive for HIV even if they don't carry the virus

- Experimental HIV vaccines may induce antibody seropositivity.
- We do not know how long the body will retain these antibodies, so even former study participants may test antibody positive.
- Tests such as EIA, western blot and rapid tests detect HIV antibodies, not the virus, resulting in a potentially false diagnosis for some HIV vaccine trial participants.

Incorrect HIV diagnoses of trial participants create significant undesired impacts

- Cause unwarranted patient distress.
- Impact HIV reporting to public health authorities.
- Compromise a participant's "blind" HIV vaccine study participation, which is needed for accurate conclusions about a vaccine's efficacy.

Vaccine trial participants are instructed to decline HIV tests outside the study sites

- Patients may decline HIV tests due to current or former study participation.
- HIV tests are available through the test participant's vaccine trial use.

Avoid the potential for an incorrect diagnosis

1. Inform the patient of his/her legal rights surrounding HIV testing. He/she must consent to—and has the right to refuse—an HIV test.
2. Ask patients whether they have participated in an HIV vaccine trial—even if they don't fit your perception of a study participant.
3. Familiarize yourself with HIV vaccine trials happening in your area. Visit www.hvtn.org for information.
4. If you need HIV test results on a patient who is an HIV vaccine trial participant, contact the participant's trial site to coordinate the HIV test.

We are happy to help

The HIV Vaccine Trials Network is an academically based research organization of scientists and communities committed to eliminating the spread of HIV in the world by finding a safe and effective vaccine. The Network is supported through a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. To learn more about the HVTN, please visit www.hvtn.org.

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TRIALS NETWORK