



WHY AIDS AND HIV ARE NOT THE SAME

“HIV and AIDS are related, but they’re not the same”, reports a WebMD article medically reviewed by chief physician Neha Pathak. Moreover, Medical News Today contributing doctor Daniel Murrel and psychotherapist Jayne Leonard add that “HIV infection and AIDS are not the same condition, and they are not the same diagnosis.”

Understanding HIV

Murrel and Leonard explain that “HIV is a virus that attacks a type of white blood cell called a CD4 cell in the body’s immune system”. Your body can fight off some viruses, but HIV is a virus that stays in the body once it is present, and according to Murrel, “It reduces the body’s ability to fight infection and illness.”

That said, Murrel writes that antiretroviral therapy “can minimise the effect of the virus by slowing or halting its progression”. This therapy works by reducing the levels of the virus in your bloodstream “to levels where it is no longer detectable”. Murrel and Leonard state that “In the first stage of HIV, two to four weeks after contracting the virus, people can experience flu-like symptoms, including, aching muscles, chills, fatigue, fever, mouth ulcers, night sweats, rashes, sore throat, and swollen lymph nodes”. However, not everyone will experience these symptoms.

Protect yourself through safe and hygienic practices and contact a professional healthcare provider for any concerns you may have.

Understanding AIDS

AIDS is a “syndrome, or a range of symptoms,” that develops if a person with HIV does not receive treatment. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says AIDS – or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome – “is the most severe stage of HIV (Stage 3).”

The syndrome attacks and weakens the immune system, placing the body at risk of contracting opportunistic infections (OIs), warns the CDC.

It further reports, “Today, OIs are less common in people with HIV because of effective HIV treatment” (antiretroviral treatment). However, the CDC recommends talking to a healthcare provider for awareness of the “things that could expose you to OIs at work, at home, and on vacation.”

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