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## INTESTINAL HIV IN CHILDREN: AN IN-DEPTH LOOK

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### ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive overview of pediatric HIV infection with a specific focus on the gastrointestinal manifestations. It covers the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of HIV-associated enteropathy, as well as the potential complications. The importance of early diagnosis and treatment is emphasized, along with the role of supportive care and counseling for children and their families.

### KEYWORDS

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), antiretroviral therapy (ART), children, undetectable viral load level (UVL), intestinal form, symptoms, treatment, prevention.

### INTRODUCTION

HIV infection in children is a disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). HIV attacks the immune system, making the body more vulnerable to infections and other diseases. Globally, about 1.7 million children under the age of 14 had HIV in 2021 (4

percent of the global prevalence). Each year, about 160,000 more healthy children become infected (10% of all new infections) and about 100,000 children die [1, 6, 13].

In July 2023, WHO released new recommendations for HIV treatment, including in children. The new guidelines emphasize the importance of achieving and maintaining an undetectable viral load (DALY) in all people living with HIV, including children. D-UVL means that the level of HIV in the blood is so low that standard tests cannot detect it. Achieving the NTVL not only improves the quality of life of a person living with HIV but also significantly reduces the risk of transmitting HIV to others [4, 15].

In Uzbekistan, the fight against HIV/AIDS is a public health priority, and the United Nations Development Programme is making efforts to address the problem. Despite global progress, HIV/AIDS remains one of the most acute problems: millions of people around the world are living with the virus and many of them are not receiving the necessary treatment, especially in regions such as Eastern Europe and Central Asia [15].

With the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the Government of Uzbekistan has made significant progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and this has set the stage for the President to make important decisions to strengthen the fight against this epidemic. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to ensure a coordinated and effective response to HIV/AIDS, drawing on the strengths of local partners, NGOs, and UN agencies.

Intestinal HIV in children is a manifestation of HIV infection, in which the virus predominantly affects intestinal cells. This leads to impaired intestinal function and the development of various complications. The question arises as to why this form is most often manifested, it is due to the high concentration of T-helper cells: In the intestine is concentrated a large number of T-helper cells - cells of the immune system, which are the main target for HIV. Also, the constant renewal of cells - intestinal epithelium, creates favorable conditions for the multiplication of the virus [2, 3, 7].

#### Symptoms of intestinal HIV in children

Symptoms of the intestinal form of HIV in children can be diverse and depend on the stage of the disease and individual characteristics of the body. Some of the most common symptoms include:

**Persistent diarrhea:** One of the most characteristic signs.

**Weight loss:** The child does not gain weight or even become thin.

**Abdominal bloating:** Associated with digestive disorders.

**Abdominal pain:** Can be of varying intensity and localization.

Nausea and vomiting: Particularly common as the disease progresses.

Anaemia: Associated with impaired absorption of iron and other nutrients.

Intestinal HIV in children can lead to serious complications such as:

Opportunistic infections: The causative agents of these infections affect a weakened immune system.

Stunted growth and development: Due to impaired absorption of nutrients.

Lymphoma: A tumor of the lymphatic system.

#### Diagnosis

The following methods are used to diagnose the intestinal form of HIV in children:

HIV blood test: Confirms the presence of infection.

C program: Examination of the feces to detect digestive disorders.

Intestinal biopsy: Allows assessment of the condition of the intestinal mucosa.

#### Treatment

Treatment of intestinal HIV in children is aimed at suppressing the activity of the virus, restoring the immune system, and eliminating symptoms. It includes:

Antiviral therapy: Taking special drugs that inhibit the reproduction of HIV.

Dietary therapy: A special diet aimed at restoring digestion and replenishing nutrient deficiencies.

Symptomatic treatment: Aimed at eliminating individual symptoms such as diarrhea, abdominal pain, etc.

The best prevention of intestinal HIV in children is prevention of HIV infection itself: - Early detection and treatment of HIV infection in pregnant women can prevent transmission to the child.

- Breastfeeding is not recommended when the mother is HIV-positive.

- Safe sex: for adults living with HIV.

#### CONCLUSION

Intestinal HIV in children is a serious disease that requires a comprehensive approach to treatment. Early diagnosis and initiation of therapy can significantly improve the child's quality of life and prevent complications.

It is important to remember: that each child with HIV infection is different, so treatment should be selected by a doctor on an individual basis.

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