



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: HIV: Treatment and Lifestyle Management (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: HG3P 34

Superclass: PA

Publication date: August 2016

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable learners to develop knowledge and understanding of diagnosis treatment and lifestyle management strategies, both medical and personal, for those living with HIV. This includes understanding current research and thinking in relation to treatment methods. The Unit enables the learner to understand the monitoring of treatments for HIV. This Unit will assist the learner to investigate current developments and impact of new treatments and where these are limited. The Unit also offers the learner the opportunity to compare how HIV is treated in countries outwith the UK and understand the role of legislation, campaigning, lobbying and anti-discriminatory policies and practices and their impact on HIV.

This Unit is suitable for learners wishing to study the Unit as a stand-alone Unit or to study it as part of a Group Award. The Unit is suitable for learners who wish to gain employment, or who may already be employed, in health and social care, education and/or criminal justice sector. The Unit is suitable for learners to gain knowledge of HIV Infection as it relates to these sectors and/or for learners who wish to seek employment within a specialist HIV resource.

Learners may wish to undertake this Unit and/or the Group Award as a means of seeking further progression within their workplace or as a means of progressing to further or higher-level of study.

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Describe diagnosis and treatment methods including medical and self-management strategies.
- 2 Analyse current developments on treatments and lifestyle management as they relate to HIV.
- 3 Explain the role of legislation and its impact on individuals/groups and/or organisations involved with HIV.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the Unit

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates may benefit from having attained one of the following or equivalent levels of award:

- ◆ Child, Health and Social Care Units at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Science Units at SCQF level 5/6
- ◆ Communication Units at SCQF level 6
- ◆ Skills for Work/Health Units at SCQF level 5/6

Those with vocational experience may be considered without production of previous academic achievement.

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Describe diagnosis and treatment methods including medical and self-management strategies.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Understanding diagnosis of HIV
- ◆ Screening for HIV during pregnancy
- ◆ Research on HIV treatments — methods and programmes
- ◆ Medical methodologies for monitoring HIV
- ◆ Self-management strategies

Outcome 2

Analyse current developments on treatments and lifestyle management as they relate to HIV.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Use and impact of anti-retroviral treatment
- ◆ Management of HIV where anti-retroviral treatment is limited
- ◆ Research on recent developments on cures, vaccines and treatments

Outcome 3

Explain the role of legislation and its impact on individuals/groups and/or organisations involved with HIV.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Relevant Legislation and its impact in relation to HIV and the impact on individuals/groups living with HIV
- ◆ Relevant Legislation and its impact in relation to HIV on organisations
- ◆ Anti-discrimatory policy and practices within organisations
- ◆ International differences in relation to HIV
- ◆ Role of campaigning and lobbying in relation to HIV

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills across all Outcomes by showing that they can:

- ◆ describe how HIV is diagnosed.
- ◆ describe two HIV medical treatment methods for managing HIV.
- ◆ use two examples and explain the importance of Lifestyle Management in the treatment of HIV.
- ◆ describe the strengths and weaknesses of HIV screening during pregnancy.
- ◆ explain the importance of developing new treatment options for HIV.
- ◆ describe the use and effectiveness of anti-retroviral treatment.
- ◆ describe one example of recent medical advancement in relation to HIV prevention.
- ◆ research one example of a potential cure, vaccine or treatment.
- ◆ identify two pieces of legislation and explain the impact of these on individuals/groups living with HIV and organisations involved with HIV.
- ◆ describe how organisational policies can promote anti-discriminatory practices for individuals living with HIV.
- ◆ explain the importance of campaigning and lobbying in relation to HIV.
- ◆ research two examples of campaigns and describe what they are trying to achieve.

All of the above Outcomes (1–3) could be included in an investigative report that the candidate can build over time while studying this Unit.

OR

The candidate could provide the same information in an essay format of approximately 1,500 words.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: HIV: Treatment and Lifestyle Management (SCQF level 7)

Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Outcome 1

Learners should understand how HIV is diagnosed and when individuals have been diagnosed what treatments are available to them to monitor and manage their HIV status. These treatments consist of support from medicines and medical practitioners as well as advice and guidance to individuals on their Lifestyle Management choices to monitor and manage their HIV status.

Tests to confirm diagnosis of HIV are available from a variety of health professionals. Tests to confirm diagnosis of HIV are available from a variety of health professionals. There are a variety of different types of test and testing locations. These vary from Genital Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics, to community testing facilities, home testing and home sampling. Learners should have the opportunity to discuss these.

Learners should understand viral load testing. This is a procedure to show how active HIV is within the body. The test for viral load measures how many particles of HIV are circulating in the blood. The results are given as the number of 'copies' of HIV per millilitre of blood. Learners should understand that viral load test results could fluctuate considerably if individuals are not receiving treatment for HIV. CD4 testing can complement Viral Load Testing and is another option for diagnosis. CD4 cells (sometimes called T-cells, T-lymphocytes, or helper cells) are white blood cells that play an important role in the immune system. Your CD4 cell count gives an indication of the health of the immune system — our body's natural defense system against pathogens, infections and illnesses.

The learner should research where to access HIV tests and to investigate the benefits of testing for the individual living with HIV. The learner should understand the benefits of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP is a course of HIV drugs taken before sex to reduce the risk of getting HIV. PrEP is intended for people who are at high risk of getting HIV. This would include those in a relationship with an HIV positive partner or people who have many sexual partners but find it very hard to use condoms. In trials, HIV negative people have been given HIV drugs in the hope that this will stop them contracting HIV if they have unprotected sex with someone living with HIV. Results in trials have been promising, with PrEP significantly lowering the risk of becoming HIV positive and without major side effects.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Learners should engage in discussion around the issue of choice in managing one's own health in relation to HIV through the use and choice of particular tests and who provides these. Learners should be encouraged to research the advantages and disadvantages of testing for the individual. For example, some advantages could be the opportunity to seek support in a way that suits the individual, increased sense of control if managing one's own situation. Some disadvantages may be in lack of knowledge of where to get the best help. Some private costs may be prohibitive for some individuals. Learners should debate and discuss issues around public health screening.

Outcome 2

Learners should understand that treatment with anti-HIV drugs does not cure HIV but reduces the amount of the virus (the individual's viral load) to very low (undetectable) levels. Most individuals will take a combination of drugs, which they are likely to require for the rest of their life. Treatment with anti-HIV drugs is sometimes called combination therapy as many individuals usually take three different drugs at the same time. HIV treatment is also known as antiretroviral therapy or highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). The aim of HIV treatment is to achieve an undetectable viral load in the blood. This means the level of HIV in the blood is so low that it cannot be detected by tests used to measure viral load. It does not mean there is no HIV at all in the blood. CD4 count testing is another method for checking the health and wellbeing of the individual with HIV as noted in Outcome 1.

There are advantages and disadvantages of starting HIV treatment that could include the following:

Advantages:

- ◆ You may have less illness if HIV has been making you ill
- ◆ The treatment will stop HIV reproducing in your body
- ◆ Your immune system will get stronger
- ◆ You will become less infectious. This is important if your partner is HIV negative and/or you wish to have a baby.

Disadvantages:

- ◆ You may experience side effects from the drugs
- ◆ Taking your drugs in the right way and right time (adherence)
- ◆ There is a risk of developing a resistance to the drugs

Learners should understand what combination therapy means and that there are different types of medication that work at different stages of the virus replication. The learner should understand why medication is a treatment and not a cure.

Learners should be aware that medication is only one aspect of the management of HIV. The candidate should understand the importance of Lifestyle Management on living with HIV. Learners should consider the importance of lifestyle choices including diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking, social networks, mental health and healthy relationship.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Learners should be aware of the importance of treatment adherence to HIV medications and the challenges involved in effectively adhering to HIV medication. Treatment adherence means taking medications consistently and correctly, as they are prescribed. Learners will understand the role that treatment adherence plays in achieving and maintaining an undetectable viral load, along with the various barriers to treatment adherence. These barriers can include, for example, medication side effects, stigma, mental health issues, drug use, housing insecurity and food insecurity. However, there are a number of strategies that can be used to improve treatment adherence; learners will become familiar with the approaches that can be used to support individuals in improving adherence.

In the investigation of the above the candidate should understand the issues of scientific evidence based practice within conventional medication and the 'placebo effect' of benefits experienced by individuals who may feel better and feel less anxious by the taking of alternative and/or complementary medicines. Some individuals use these other therapies to relieve the side effects of the anti-HIV medicines. Learners are to be encouraged to research current findings and thinking in relation to potential cures, appropriate vaccines and current and progressive treatment for HIV.

Outcome 3

Learners should investigate the content of this Outcome from within and outwith the UK. This will allow the learner to understand the many differences across countries in relation to the impact (positive and/or negative) of current legislation. For example, in the UK the Equalities Act 2010 provides protection under the law for individuals living with HIV. Under this legislation they are considered 'disabled' regardless of their health status. Therefore individuals with HIV have rights in relation to access to employment and training as well as protection within it. The Data Protection Act 1998 in the UK also offers protection to individuals in relation to their personal details and who can have access to these. Learners should be introduced in class to other pieces of legislation as they impact individuals living with HIV.

Learners should be introduced to groups who have been stigmatised due to their HIV status. Those learners who have completed Unit 1 — *HIV: An Introduction* will have knowledge of stigma and discrimination from their studies in this. Learners should also note that many of the groups who are stigmatised in relation to their status as living with HIV are already part of groups within society which are already stigmatised as being homosexual, homeless, drug users, etc. These individuals are therefore subject to a double discrimination within society, which further alienates and discriminates against them. Stigmatised groups could include:

- ◆ Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals' (LGBT)
- ◆ Black African heterosexual men
- ◆ Those who use drugs and particularly those who inject
- ◆ Sex Workers
- ◆ Sexual behaviours of individuals (male or female)

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: HIV: Treatment and Lifestyle Management (SCQF level 7)

Learners should be introduced to the criminalisation of HIV and in particular become familiar with the prosecutions of HIV-positive people for HIV transmission. Prosecutions for HIV transmission have occurred in England, Scotland and Wales; some people have been found guilty and sent to prison. Prosecutions have happened in all three countries, although the law is different in Scotland from that in England and Wales. For example, In Scotland, an HIV-positive person can be prosecuted for putting someone at risk through unprotected sex, even if no HIV transmission has occurred. Learners will be presented with the differences between the laws in the UK and understand in which situations there is a duty to disclose. Learners should understand the impact of the law on HIV prevention, testing, treatment and management. Outcomes include heightened stigma and misinformation about HIV transmission, a reluctance to disclose HIV status, reduced rates of HIV testing, and social isolation among people living with HIV.

Learners should understand the purpose of campaigns and lobbying to effect change at the level of government and policy makers. There are many organisations that work with individuals living with HIV and provide information and support services. One such organisation is Terence Higgins Trust which campaigns on behalf of individuals living with HIV and has effected positive change. Organisations like this are able to lobby governments for legislative change to benefit individuals living with HIV. Internal HIV/AIDS Alliance is an organisation that has recently written a policy brief – ‘Leave No-one Behind in the Post-2015 Health Agenda — Ensuring Universal Health Coverage for Marginalised and Key Populations’. This policy brief calls for legislations and better protection for those living with HIV around the world. One way in which they seek to achieve this is by calling on governments to make sure that everyone has access to effective health care. Learners should understand the role of government — local, national and international — in the prevention and management of the spread of HIV as well as supporting individuals living with HIV through the allocation of medications, practical and emotional supports to the individual living with HIV as well as provision of educational materials to raise awareness.

Learners should be set some tasks/projects to investigate current campaigns or lobbying activities in different countries in relation to those living with HIV.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

This Unit can be effectively delivered in the order of Outcomes as they appear within this Unit specification. It is also possible to deliver the Unit by presenting information within Outcome 1 and linking this with Outcome 2. Outcome 3 supports the underpinning of legislation to challenge discrimination of those living with HIV and therefore could be presented after Outcome 1 and 2 so the candidate understands the important role of legislation and public campaigns to provide educational programmes and understanding to bring more public awareness to the facts of HIV. This should clearly identify the role of government — local, national and international — in the prevention and management of the spread of HIV as well as supporting individuals living with HIV through the allocation of medications, practical and emotional supports to the individual living with HIV as well as provision of educational materials to raise awareness.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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This Unit should be delivered in a learner centred way encouraging Learners to share their understanding by exploring and researching information in relation to the issues relating to HIV such as diagnosis and treatment as well as protection from discrimination for those living with HIV. Learners should be encouraged to investigate the differences between countries in how individuals within these countries understand HIV and those living with it. Learners should present evidence of the treatments and potential discriminations in different countries.

Learners could engage in individual or group exploration of the issues within this Unit. Effective use of video, pod casts and other visual and/or social media materials should be used to support the learning process. It may be appropriate to involve local agencies that provide support to individuals/groups living with HIV and/or provide information about HIV and the treatments available. This could include speakers to the classroom setting or arranging field visits to these organisations.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence may be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

All Outcomes could be answered with the learner using an investigative project to address the evidence points above as they relate to the knowledge and skills for each of these learning Outcomes. The project should be learner led with some support and guidance from the tutor at the outset. The information for the project could be gathered over the Unit teaching with collated information presented towards the end of the Unit for tutor consideration or the learner could deliver their findings by means of an individual or group presentation.

Alternatively, this Unit could be assessed holistically within an essay covering all of the evidence points above as they relate to the knowledge and skills for each of the learning Outcomes. This essay should be 1,500 words approximately. It is expected the learner could produce this essay outwith the classroom setting.

These assessment methods should be completed under Supervision and the tutor/assessor should be satisfied the work produced by the learner is their own. There may also be a requirement for authentication of the learners' work, for example if the learner is undertaking this Unit as distance learning.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

However, this Unit should provide opportunities for candidates to develop skills within their learning. These could include:

Communication through the production of written evidence and oral discussions within group work.

Working with Others within group work activities in class.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) through the production of electronically produced assessment evidence.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: HIV: Treatment and Lifestyle Management

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit will introduce you to the following Outcomes:

- 1 Describe diagnosis and treatment methods including medical and self-management strategies.
- 2 Analyse current developments on treatments and lifestyle management as they relate to HIV.
- 3 Explain the role of legislation and its impact on individuals/groups and/or organisations involved with HIV.

This Unit will introduce you to ways in which HIV can be diagnosed, treated and managed by medication and medical interventions as well as lifestyle management strategies. You will investigate some lifestyle management strategies that individuals living with HIV can control and implement to keep safe. For example, engaging in safer sex and/or not sharing needles if they are injecting drugs. Screening for HIV during pregnancy will also be explored and discussed. There are also a lot of organisations that offer advice, support and guidance in relation to treatment and management. These organisations provide testing services to allow individuals to find out if they are living with HIV (diagnosis). You will be introduced to some of these by your tutor and will be encouraged to investigate others either by yourself or within small groups. You will also understand that medication is only one aspect of the treatment and management of HIV. Individuals living with HIV can make effective use of Lifestyle Management that encourages them to take control of their lives and to make some behaviour changes that could have a positive effect on their physical and mental wellbeing as they live with HIV. This can include following a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity, taking medications as required and ceasing smoking as well as making effective decisions and goal setting.

You will then be introduced to current methodologies for testing and treatments for individuals living with HIV. You will investigate and understand the different types of medication that is available and the effectiveness of these for those taking them. You will be aware of the changing availability of drugs and how different individuals in different countries use anti-retroviral drugs as well as the role of alternative and/or complimentary treatments. You will investigate and understand the management of HIV where anti-retroviral treatment is limited. You will research, individually or in groups, current information in relation to potential cures, vaccines and treatments.

It is very important to understand the role of legislation in protecting individuals who are living with HIV. Your tutor will introduce you to some current and relevant legislation. These legislations and policy procedures may be from different countries so you can compare and contrast the differences. From these legislations organisations are required to have anti-discriminatory policies in place for workers to follow to reduce stigma and discrimination for those living with HIV. You will understand what is meant by anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practices and how these empower individuals living with HIV and especially the higher profile groups that tend to be stigmatised more readily. If you studied Unit 1 — *HIV: An Introduction* then knowledge of stigma and discrimination will be familiar to you. You will also investigate and understand the role of campaigning and lobbying by individuals living with HIV and organisations that support them and campaign on their behalf.

General information for learners

Unit title: HIV: Treatment and Lifestyle Management

The assessment for this Unit could take the form of an investigative report for all Outcomes. The information for this can be collated over time during your learning. Your tutor should provide guidance and support during your investigation. Your tutor will inform you of whether this investigation will be an individual or group presentation (verbal or written). It is also possible for the assessment to be in essay format covering all of the Evidence Requirements for this Unit.

You should develop skills in communication, group work and working effectively with others. There will be opportunity to increase skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as you use the internet to investigate and produce electronic versions of your findings. This Unit will also provide opportunities for you to develop wider skills during your learning. These could include:

Global Citizenship — through better understanding of other cultures and opportunities for change.

Employability — This Unit will provide you with knowledge and information that should be of use in the health, social, child care and criminal justice areas of employment.