

Guidelines on Consent for HIV Testing

(A) General Principles

1. There is as yet no cure for HIV/AIDS. A positive HIV antibody test carries with it profound psychological impact & possible serious social and financial consequences to the individual.
2. HIV antibody test should not be regarded as a routine test in the medical setting and consent of the patient should be obtained beforehand.
3. Any person has the right to refuse HIV antibody testing. HIV test, which entails an invasive medical procedure, should not be performed without the patients' consent. The doctor may expose himself to litigation and should be prepared to defend his action on the basis of necessity of testing the patient.

(B) Recommendations

1. HIV antibody testing should be performed only with explicit & informed consent of the individual. *Explanation should be given to the person concerning reason for the HIV antibody testing and its implications.
2. In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to obtain consent due to the individual being unconscious or unfit to give consent, the consent of parent, legal guardian or close relative should be sought if the doctor believes that testing is necessary for the preservation of the patient's health or for the safety of persons other than the patient.

*An individual should be counselled on the meaning of an HIV antibody test (positive or negative), the medical, sociopsychological and possible insurance implications & importance of risk reduction. He/she may also be referred to the AIDS Counselling & Health Education Services (2780 2211) or other institutions offering pre- & post-test counselling.

Department of Health

January 1993

ACA (87)M1