



HIV SPECIALIST™

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF HIV MEDICINE

Credentialing Exam Content Outline

Below is an outline of the Domains, Tasks, Knowledge and Skills evaluated on the HIV Specialist™ Credentialing Exam. Each Domain is a high level function for the role of the HIV Specialist™. Domains consist of Tasks that an HIV Specialist™ will be able to perform competently. For each Task, a list of Knowledge or Skills is provided.

Each question on the Exam is directly related to one of these Task/Knowledge statements. The number of questions on the exam for each Task is determined based on the results of the Role Delineation Study (RDS) completed in 2023. An RDS is a standardized study of a profession designed to establish the knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice.

Domain I: Prevention

Task 1: Promote early detection and prevention by educating the patient on the importance of HIV screening and discussing its benefits and implications.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Epidemiology
2. Perinatal screening guidelines
3. Highly impacted or underscreened populations (e.g., sexual and gender minorities, racial and ethnic minorities, adolescents, older adults)
4. Clinical decision-making
5. Social and economic considerations

Task 2: Assess the patient's relative risk for acquiring and/or transmitting HIV to reduce transmission of HIV and other STIs.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Obtaining a sexual history and assessing sexual practices
2. Risks of needle sharing or sharing injection supplies (works)
3. Risks associated with substance and alcohol use
4. Occupational and nonoccupational exposures
5. Impact of abuse and violence
6. Vertical transmission risk
7. Addressing misinformation

Task 3: Educate patients on harm reduction methods to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV and other STIs in accordance with current guidelines.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. STI pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis and treatment
2. HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis and treatment
3. Harm reduction methods for injection drug use
4. Vaccinations
5. Barrier methods and PPE
6. Communication with partners
7. Addressing misinformation

Task 4: Initiate and manage harm reduction methods to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV and other STIs in accordance with current guidelines.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. STI pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis and treatment including expedited partner therapy
2. HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis and treatment
3. Vaccinations
4. Barrier methods and PPE
5. Addressing misinformation

Task 5: Counsel individuals about HIV treatment as prevention.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. U = U and medication adherence
2. Preconception counseling
3. Perinatal Transmission
4. Chest (Breast) feeding practices

Domain II: Diagnosis

Task 1: Order and interpret clinically appropriate HIV tests based on incidence and prevalence rates in various populations to diagnose HIV-1 and HIV-2 accurately.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Types of tests and characteristics
2. Inconclusive and false positive test results
3. Clinical decision making
4. Window periods

Task 2: Identify relevant elements of patient's history to aid in the evaluation of HIV status.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Risk mitigating vs risk enhancing factors

Task 3: Recognize and diagnose HIV at different stages of clinical presentation through patient history, physical examination, appropriate laboratory tests, and clinical signs to counsel the patient and encourage initiation of treatment through shared decision making.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Identifying acute retroviral syndrome
2. AIDS (Stage 3) defining OIs
3. HIV related malignancies
4. Interpreting lab results
5. HIV associated co-infections
6. HIV associated comorbidities

Domain III: Treatment and Management

Task 1: Recommend ART by applying Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and International AIDS Society–USA (IAS–USA) Guidelines to reduce HIV transmission, improve and/or preserve immune function and quality of life, prevent opportunistic infections, and increase survival.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. First line ART regimens
2. Factors affecting timing of initiation of ART
3. Rapid initiation of ART
4. ART considerations for perinatal populations
5. ART considerations for pediatric populations
6. ART considerations for treatment experienced populations
7. ART considerations for comorbidities
8. ART considerations for drug-drug interactions
9. ART considerations for social-economic barriers
10. ART considerations for adherence challenges
11. ART considerations for transgender populations

Task 2: Develop individualized treatment plans through shared decision-making using medication history, supplement use, medical history, social history, laboratory test results, and other evaluations.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. First line ART regimens
2. Factors affecting timing of initiation of ART
3. Rapid initiation of ART
4. ART considerations for perinatal populations
5. ART considerations for pediatric populations
6. ART considerations for treatment experienced populations
7. ART considerations for comorbidities
8. ART considerations for drug-drug interactions including complementary/alternative medications and supplements
9. ART considerations for social-economic barriers
10. ART considerations for adherence challenges
11. ART considerations for achieving viral suppression
12. ART considerations for adverse effect history
13. ART considerations for degree of immunosuppression and viremia
14. ART considerations for co-infections
15. ART considerations for transgender populations
16. Treatment considerations for co-infections

Task 3: Monitor the efficacy, toxicity, tolerability, patient adherence, and presence of resistance to prescribed ART using patient history, physical examination, and laboratory parameters.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Selection and frequency of lab monitoring
2. Interpreting lab results
3. Anti-retroviral specific adverse effects

Task 4: Prescribe appropriate opportunistic infections prophylaxis based on laboratory parameters, geographic exposures, and current guidelines to improve quality of life and survival.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Medication selection and dosing considerations
2. Interpreting lab results
3. Identification and management of medication contraindications
4. Initiation and discontinuation of prophylaxis
5. Primary vs secondary prophylaxis

Task 5: Optimize treatment by identifying and addressing the five domains of social determinants of health (Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Health Care Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context) and recognizing the unique challenges to access and care that patients face.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Accessing financial support systems
2. Assessing barriers to adherence and engagement in care
3. Recognizing health literacy barriers
4. Resources for transportation and housing support
5. Assessing for food insecurity
6. Identifying stigma and discrimination

Task 6: Coordinate appropriate medical care of opportunistic infections, STIs, co-infections, and co-morbidities.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Indications for specialty care
2. Identifying availability of resources
3. Coordination strategies to address social determinants of health
4. Gender affirming care

Task 7: Engage patients in HIV-specific preventive screenings to improve quality of life and increase survival.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. HPV-related cancer screenings and schedules
2. Cardiovascular preventive screenings and schedules
3. Bone health preventive screenings and schedules
4. STI preventive screenings and schedules
5. Depression screenings and schedules
6. Routine general health screenings and schedules

Task 8: Counsel patients on HIV-specific immunizations to improve quality of life and increase survival.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. CDC vaccination schedule
2. Impact of immunocompetence on vaccination schedule
3. Travel vaccines
4. Post-vaccination monitoring

Task 9: Incorporate the potential impact of aging in the HIV population into clinical decision making.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Identifying HIV associated neurocognitive disorders
2. Identifying and evaluating frailty
3. Recognizing the impact of HIV on multimorbidities
4. Addressing polypharmacy
5. Recognizing the metabolic impact of ART and HIV

Task 10: Use technology to increase access to care and patient engagement.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Tele-health
2. Virtual communication
3. Digital applications
4. Point-of-care tools

Domain IV: Professional Responsibility and Health Equity

Task 1: Recognize federal public health regulations regarding disclosure and confidentiality of HIV results and related issues.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Legal precedents and their implications
2. Reporting requirements
3. Partner notification programs
4. Occupational disclosure requirements

Task 2: Identify appropriate candidates for clinical trials and expanded access programs based on inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Reviewing and assessing research protocols
2. Interpreting study design
3. Compassionate use eligibility

Task 3: Identify national programs and initiatives to optimize care, promote equitable access to care, and reduce health care inequities.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Current national programs to end the HIV epidemic
2. Medication assistance programs

Task 4: Recognize the importance of cultural humility in optimizing HIV outcomes in marginalized, oppressed, and resource-limited communities.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Addressing language and literacy barriers using appropriate resources
2. Recognizing and mitigating implicit bias
3. Practicing trauma informed care principles
4. Integrating culturally appropriate practices into individualized care

Task 5: Facilitate end of life decision making discussions.

Knowledge of or skill in:

1. Palliative care
2. Advanced directives
3. Factors influencing ART continuation or discontinuation
4. Surrogate decision makers/DPOA