

New Study Finds Skin Conditions Remain Prevalent in People With HIV Despite Advances in Treatment

Half of HIV-positive people had at least one dermatologic diagnosis between 2011 and 2023.

November 3, 2025 By George Washington University

Washington, DC — A new study led by researchers at the George Washington University and published through the DC Cohort, one of the largest HIV longitudinal studies in the United States, finds that nearly half of people living with HIV experience skin conditions—even in the modern era of highly effective antiretroviral therapy.

The study, [Prevalence, Incidence, and Risk Factors for Dermatologic Conditions in People with HIV in the Modern Antiretroviral Era](#), examined medical records from 11,738 adults in Washington, D.C., between 2011 and 2023.

Key findings include:

- 49% of participants had at least one dermatologic diagnosis; infectious conditions such as fungal infections, herpes, and viral warts were most common.
- New skin condition diagnoses decreased sharply over the past decade, reflecting progress in HIV treatment.
- Patients receiving care in community settings and those with public insurance were more likely to be diagnosed with dermatologic disease, underscoring structural barriers to specialized care.

“Dermatologic disease has always been a hallmark of HIV, and while treatment has dramatically reduced many risks, skin conditions remain a significant burden,” said Adam Friedman, professor and chair of dermatology at GW and senior author of the study. “Our findings highlight the need for ongoing, targeted dermatologic care, especially as people with HIV live longer, healthier lives.”

Yagiz Matthew Akiska, the lead author of the study notes that early diagnosis and prompt initiation of HIV treatment remain critical for reducing the long-term risk of both infectious and malignant skin conditions. They also emphasize the importance of equitable access to dermatologic expertise

to prevent disparities in care and outcomes.

“As the population of people living with HIV ages, chronic skin conditions are becoming more prominent and often persist despite effective HIV treatment,” said Yagiz Matthew Akiska, MD/MPH candidate at GW and lead author of the study. “Addressing these issues requires integrating dermatology into HIV care, so that patients receive comprehensive support for both their overall health and their quality of life.”

This [news release](#) was published by George Washington University on October 14, 2025.

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