

Memory and Learning

The PHACS Memory Study included 173 youth with PHIV and 85 youth exposed at birth to HIV, all ages 9 - 19. We found that memory and learning were affected in some youth in both groups.

Findings

From 2009 - 2015, we looked at several types of memory that are important for managing school, work, relationships, and other parts of life, such as:

- recalling words (verbal memory)
- remembering people, events, and places (visual recognition)
- remembering to remember something in the future (prospective memory)
- mental skills for managing tasks (executive functioning)

We found some small differences in memory and learning in both youth born with HIV and youth exposed at birth to HIV.

Youth with HIV and youth exposed at birth to HIV were about the same as each other in how they performed in memory and learning tasks. **However, both groups tended to perform worse than youth not affected by HIV.**

Youth born with HIV in our study were more likely to have memory or learning challenges if they had an AIDS-defining illness at some time in their lives. We saw differences in how well some of these youth were able to recall words, remember people, events, and places, and manage tasks.

We don't know exactly what caused these memory and learning differences. They may be caused by the way HIV works in the body. However, youth affected by HIV may also belong to racial and/or socioeconomic groups that do not receive equitable access to resources and education, and they may live with chronic stress. These factors could also impact their memory and learning skills.

What can you do?



Ask your doctor for a referral if you think you or your child need help with learning or memory skills.



Advocate for supportive learning interventions for youth affected by HIV. Contact your study coordinator to join the PHACS Young Adult Community Advisory Board or join another local advocacy organization.



ARV Safety During Pregnancy

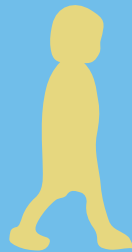
In our study, we have found that taking antiretroviral medicines (ARVs) during pregnancy is generally very safe. It protects the health of both the mother and the baby. And in 99% of cases in the U.S., when a mother takes ARVs during pregnancy, it prevents her baby from getting HIV.

Findings



After a baby is exposed to ARVs in the womb or at birth, our study follows the child as they grow up to see whether the ARVs affect their health in any way.

So far, we have not found any major health problems for babies and children exposed to HIV and ARVs while in the womb or at birth.



However, the timing of when mothers start taking certain ARVs can be important and can impact how ARVs protect babies' health. Your doctor can tell you the safest one for you.

When a baby is exposed to HIV and ARVs in the womb or at birth, this becomes part of their medical history. It is important to continue to follow their health as they grow up into adulthood.



What can you do?



Ask your doctor which ARVs are safest for you and your baby; ask how to take them correctly.



Advocate for better services and better research for mothers living with HIV and their kids. Contact your study coordinator to join the PHACS Community Advisory Board or join another local advocacy organization.