

Know Your Red Blood Cell Count! Campaign

(NAPSA)—As America enters its third decade of the AIDS epidemic, the estimated 325,000 African Americans living with HIV may be overlooking HIV-related anemia—an important condition that affects up to 95 percent of them at some point in their disease.

According to a recent survey of nearly 700 HIV-positive Americans, including more than 100 African Americans, awareness of the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of HIV-related anemia remains alarmingly low.

“The good news is that physicians are asking their patients about tiredness and weakness, which can be symptoms of anemia,” said Margaret Davis, past president of the Chicago Chapter of the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA). “However, as health care professionals, we all must take the discussion to the next level by helping patients connect these symptoms with HIV-related anemia and drive home the importance of tracking red blood cell count to determine if they are truly anemic.”

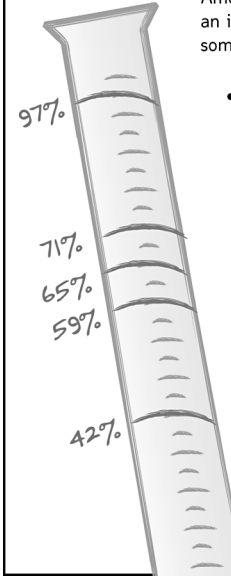
Anemia results from a below normal level of red blood cells and is a common complication of HIV/AIDS and its treatments. It can be caused by the virus itself or by certain HIV/AIDS treatments, particularly AZT (zidovudine), that suppresses the bone marrow production of red blood cells, among other factors.

It is important that people living with HIV:

- Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of HIV-related anemia. If patients experience shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat,


The Effects of HIV-Related Anemia on the African American Community

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- **97%** of African American patients say their doctors communicate their T-cell count and viral load, however, only **42%** say their doctors communicate their red blood cell count, which is used to diagnose anemia.
- **84%** of African American patients do not know at what level their red blood cell count would indicate that their health is at risk.
- **Nearly three in five (59%)** African Americans have not discussed anemia with the doctors.
- **Seven in ten (71%)** African American HIV patients agree that they need their doctor to better inform them about their blood test results.
- Since starting HIV treatment, African Americans say that carrying out household chores (**81%**) and working (**76%**) are activities that are most impacted by feeling tired and/or weak.

Source: Yankelovich Partners, Inc./Harris Interactive on behalf of Ortho Biotech Products, L.P.



dizziness, muscle weakness, impaired concentration, lightheadedness, and headaches, they should talk to their doctor.

- Keep a diary of their signs and symptoms.
- Ask their doctor about being tested. Anemia is determined by a simple blood test.
- Ask about prescription medications to treat anemia.

To increase awareness of anemia and red blood cell count, several associations are joining forces with Ortho Biotech Products, L.P.

to kick off a national Know Your Red Blood Cell Count! campaign. Partners for the program include the International Association of Physicians in AIDS Care (IAPAC), the Interamerican College of Physicians and Surgeons (ICPS), and the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA).

The program includes free red blood cell count screenings and anemia education. For more information about anemia, please call 1-888-PROCRIT (776-2748) or visit www.PROCRIT.com.