HIV DIAGNOSTICS - PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

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Abstract:

“No war on the face of earth is more destructive than the AIDS pandemic”

- Colin Powell

Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is the most dreadful immunological disease caused by HIV. First case reported more than 30 years ago, since then it claimed the lives of many people world wide. Due to the lack of proper knowledge/diagnostic measures HIV became an explosive outbreak. AIDS is now one of the five leading causes of death.

In the past, HIV diagnostic testing was based solely on antibody detection and tests such as Western blot or IFA (immunofluorescent antibody) were required to confirm HIV antibodies following a reactive screening test. But now recent advances were developed which have the ability to detect antigen and antibody simultaneously thus detection of acute infections has improved significantly. These HIV testing is straightforward and knowledge of the types of testing will afford dentists an important opportunity to help advance and preserve the health of their patients and to promote the public health of their community.

During the past three decades, significant progress has been made to improve the sensitivity and specificity of HIV assays resulting in earlier diagnosis of HIV infection. With recent findings demonstrating the high transmissibility of HIV early in infection, and the potential benefit of early initiation of treatment, it is essential to identify as many infected individuals as possible. Here, we depict the basics of HIV testing and discuss latest changes in the approach to HIV diagnostics.