

## **The HIV Positive Patient**

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The HIV epidemic continues to grow throughout the world. In 2008 there were 33.4 million people living with HIV, 2.7 million people newly infected with HIV and 2 million AIDS-related deaths.

Due to advances in HIV management, patients with HIV are now living longer and are presenting to hospital with age-related non-AIDS illnesses. These include cardiovascular disease, dyslipidaemia, diabetes, nephropathy, liver failure and neurological disease. While continuous highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) is responsible for the improved life expectancy and quality of life for patients with HIV, antiretroviral drugs have significant side effects and many drug interactions (see [www.druginteractions.org](http://www.druginteractions.org)).

With increasing HIV prevalence (59,000 people living with HIV in Oceania in 2008), anaesthetists will frequently be involved in the perioperative, obstetric and pain management care of patients with HIV. It is estimated that 25% of HIV+ve patients will present for surgery at some stage of their illness.

Painful neuropathy and other pain syndromes can make perioperative management particularly challenging. Traditional anti-neuropathic analgesics have poor efficacy for HIV-related neuropathic pain. Furthermore, co-morbid opioid dependence and neuropsychiatric disease can complicate pain management.