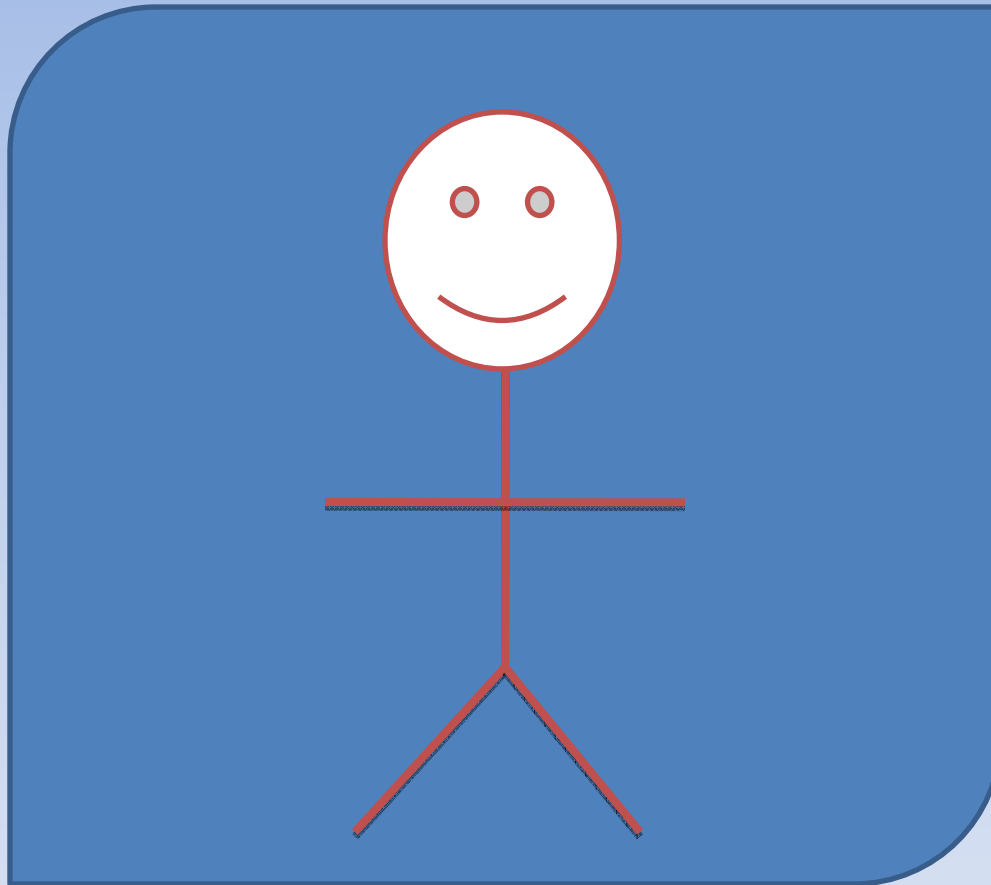


# The Adolescent with HIV

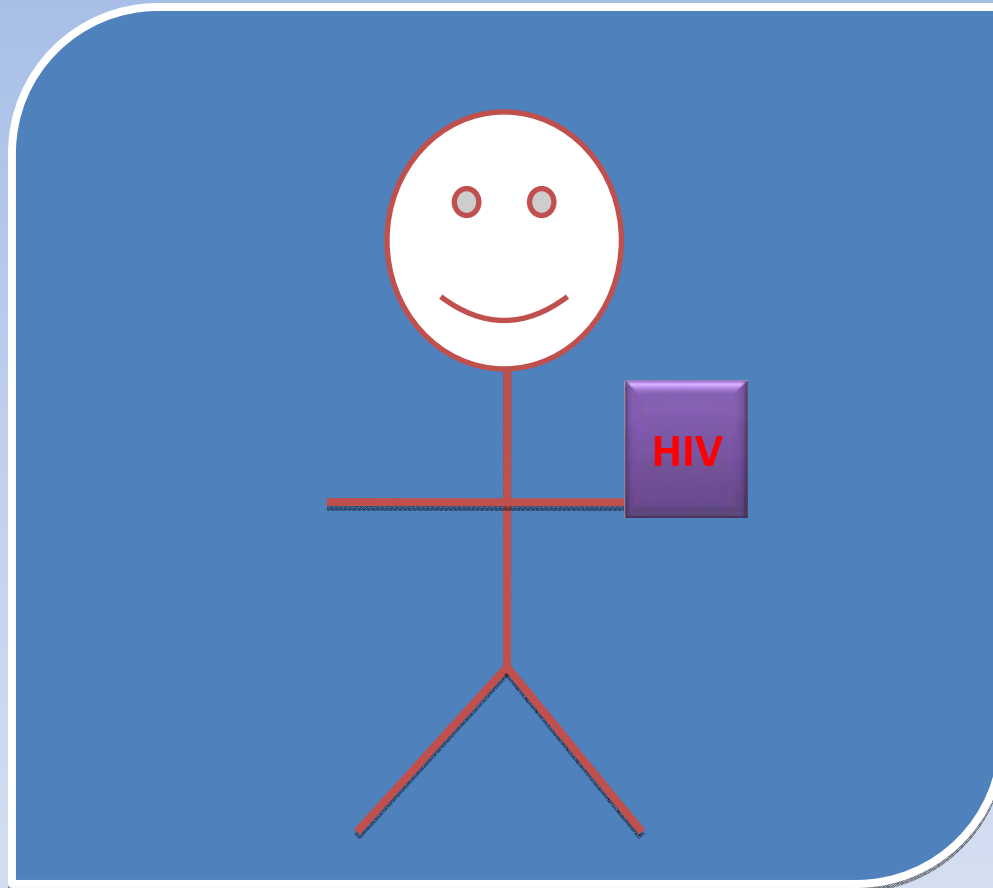
Dr Helen Clark

Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital



The Adolescent in the World



The Adolescent in the World  
with HIV



THINKSTOCK

# Adolescence

- Establishment of individuation, independence and autonomy from parents
- +
- Development of the capacity for interdependence and ability to form and sustain mutually supportive relationships outside the family
- Reach physical and sexual maturity well before becoming fully cognitively and emotionally mature
- Cognitive development, abstract thinking, information processing
- Development of Social and Moral Cognition

# HIV Infection in Adolescents

## Vertical Infection

### Infection acquired through high risk sexual behaviours and drugs

- Substance Abuse
- Early Sexual debut
- Unprotected Sex
- Multiple Partners
- Peer Group conformity

## Sexual abuse

# Adolescent Perceptions of their Disease - A Developmental Perspective

- Younger adolescent – More concrete, fatalistic, ‘may live with it without reflecting on it and more as an infection that they received through the transmission of a virus’
- Older Adolescent – More capable of abstract thinking. Consider condition less as fate more as an infection they had received through the transmission of a virus from the mother

*“I’ve known about my disease since I was six, but somewhere around thirteen to fourteen. I realised it’s importance and impact in my life. You know that’s when you fall in love.... Well actually, that’s adolescence. “*

*18 year old girl*

Coping with an HIV Infection  
Michaud et al Swiss Med Wkly 2010

# Disclosure

*‘The web of disclosure is delicate, each disclosure encumbered with consequences ‘*

J Adolesc Health 2006

- **Self**
- **Maternal disclosure**
- **Family**
- **Peer Group**
- **People you date**

## Challenges

- Stigma – Internalised
  - Externalised
- Identity Formation
  - Different
  - Same
- Self in relationship to others
- Relationship concerns (Rejection, abandonment, trust)

*‘ More people are finding out about me having AIDS and it’s getting around, so my close friends that didn’t know, now they know’*

# Adherence

The capacity to manage your medication

Depends on level of autonomy achieved

Affected by :

- Understanding of the illness
- Time
- Stress in Family / School
- Relationship with primary caregiver
- Higher level of education of primary caregiver
- Absence of parental HIV and psychiatric illness
- Neurological / psychiatric diagnosis
- Social support System

Predictors of Adherence to Antiretroviral Medications  
In Children and Adolescents with HIV Infection  
Paige et al Paediatrics 2006

*‘ I am happy to have medications; thanks to them my viraemia is low .... But on the other hand, when you feel so well, then you don’t always want to bother about taking them regularly. I admit that taking my medication has never been an automatism. I have to force myself even now. ‘*

*16 year old girl*

# Environmental Risk Factors

- Poverty
- Family dysfunction, disintegration, violence and substance abuse
- Loss of one or both biological parents
- Bereavement
- Inadequate access to medical / educational resources
- Stressful life events
- Community violence / substance abuse
- Neighbourhood disorganisation

## Psychiatric Symptomatology in Adolescents with HIV Infection

**HIV in Brain + ARV's + Psychosocial stressors  
= Psychiatric Symptoms**

- Neuropsychiatric illness
- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Adjustment/ Emotional Problems
- Externalising Behaviours
- Substance Abuse
- Somatisation
- Emergent Personality Traits
- Bereavement
- Suicide risk
- Sexual Abuse

Co-occurring Psychiatric Symptoms in Children  
Perinatally Infected with HIV and Peer Comparison Sample  
Gadow et al J Dev Behav Pediatr 2010

## Adolescent HIV as a consequence of Sexual Abuse

Profound and devastating effect on consequent psychosocial development

- Emotionally traumatised
- Depression
- Sexualised and provocative behaviour
- Increased no of sexual partners
- Adolescent Pregnancy
- Substance Abuse
- Prostitution
- Self mutilation
- Running away from home
- Emergent Personality Traits

**RISK FACTORS FOR ACQUIRING HIV IN ADOLESCENCE**

# Conceptual Model of Psychological Adjustment in Paediatric Chronic Illness with a Risk – Resistance Framework

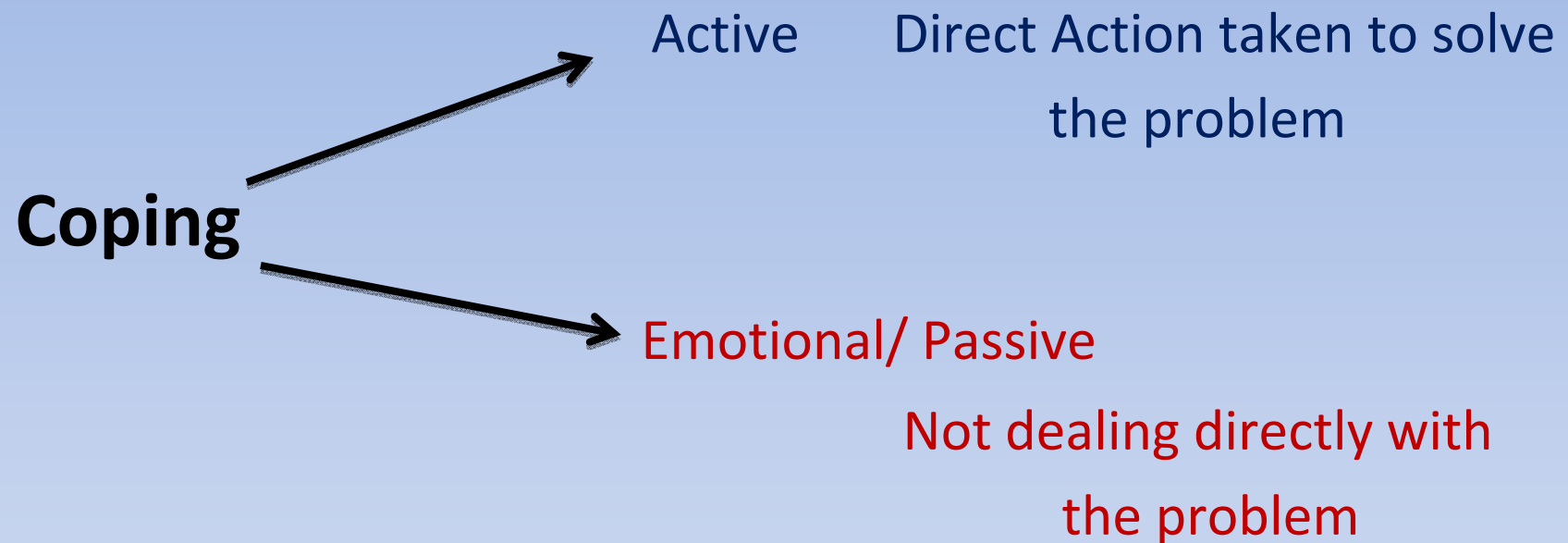
## Risk Parameters

- Disease/Disability Factors (Type of illness, severity, medication adherence)
- Functional Dependence
- Psychosocial Stressors

## Resistance Parameters

- Intrapersonal
- Social support, Family, Environment
- Stress Processing
  - Coping resources
  - Cognitive appraisal

# Learning to live actively with HIV as an Adolescent



- Health Care Facility
- Doctor/practitioner Patient Relationship
- Clinic Support structures
- Family Support
- Adolescent

***‘ I do make suggestions ... Everything I want to say I say ... And then my doctor says yes. I once proposed to take my pills differently and he agreed ‘***

***17 year old girl***