



## Do Gamma Herpes Viruses Cause Mental Illness?

### Description

#### What are gamma herpes viruses?

There are 8 different herpes viruses which tend to infect humans. Gamma herpes viruses (gammaherpesvirinae) belong to a subfamily of the [herpes virus family](#) (herpesviridae). They include:

- Epstein-Barr virus (EBV)
- Human herpes virus 8 (HHV8)

This group can only infect a very small range of host tissues.

#### How are these viruses transmitted?

EBV is spread through close contact with an infected person, particularly via the saliva. This is a very common infection that can be detected in a large proportion of the population. Transmission of HHV8 occurs through bodily fluids, usually saliva. This virus is less common, though, it is widely prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa and affects men more often than women.

#### How is a gamma herpes virus diagnosed?

As with most other herpes viruses, Epstein Barr Virus needs to be grown in a culture and isolated in order to ascertain if a person has an infection. Human herpes virus 8 can often be identified by performing a biopsy of skin lesions.

## What effect can they have on physical health?

EBV causes mononucleosis (glandular fever), which in an infection causing fatigue, fever and swollen glands in the neck. In rare cases, EBV has also been known to lead to the potentially deadly brain infection, encephalitis. It has also been identified as a cause of the cancer Burkitt lymphoma.

As with other herpes viruses, EBV can lie dormant after an initial flare up of symptoms has subsided. It then can become reactivated and cause symptoms again when the host person is stressed or has a compromised immune system.

Human herpes virus 8 has been linked to the [development of rare cancers](#) including Kaposi's sarcoma and abdominal tumours. This is why it is sometimes referred to as Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpes virus. Kaposi's sarcoma causes red, brown or purple skin lesions, which may be ulcerated and painful. In some cases, it may also affect other areas of the body such as the lungs or gastrointestinal tract.

In immunocompromised people, gamma herpes viruses can also trigger the development of Multicentric Castleman Disease (MCD). This is a lymphoproliferative syndrome which causes excessive amounts of lymphocytes to be produced, which can lead to the development of a tumour.

## What effect can they have on mental health?

As well as having an initial reaction of physical symptoms, these viruses can cause other issues to develop, including mental health problems, at a later date. This was demonstrated by a study involving 1176 Dutch adolescents. In the male participants, a significant link was found between carrying the Epstein Barr Virus and showing symptoms associated with psychosis. Those who tested positive for antibodies of EBV [scored noticeably higher](#) than those who did not have the virus.

In another case study, a 15-year-old female [developed psychosis](#) long after having been exposed to Epstein Barr virus and a herpes simplex infection. She had first had problems with EBV at age 7 and had been treated for cold sores more recently. Although her symptoms had faded, these viruses were still in her system.

As a result, at a time when she was under a lot of academic pressure, these infections resurfaced causing severe psychiatric symptoms that required hospitalisation. These included hearing imaginary voices, paranoia about her friends and family and unusually disorganised speech. Thankfully, her symptoms improved after she was treated with the anti-psychotic medication risperidone and acyclovir was used to target the herpes simplex infection.

When HHV8 causes unsightly skin lesions, these can have a negative psychological impact, especially if they are located on the face.

## What is the current treatment?

Some herpes viruses respond well to medication, however, there are currently no licensed treatments for EBV or HHV8. That said, [bioresonance therapy](#) with a BICOMÂ® machine may help to [alleviate some of the symptoms](#) of these viruses. Antipsychotic medication may be used to target serious mental health symptoms. When gamma herpes viruses lead to the development of cancers, these can be treated through chemotherapy or radiotherapy, though these are sometimes only able to improve the condition, rather than cure it.

## Conclusion

Gamma herpes viruses can cause unpleasant symptoms when a person is first infected, but they have the potential to lead to serious health problems further down the line, including certain types of cancer. These infections may also contribute towards severe mental health problems, even if they have been dormant for some time. While there are no official medications to treat these viruses directly, various treatment may help lessen the symptoms that they cause. Bioresonance has been shown to be one effective treatment method.

## Category

1. Articles

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