

Pets in the Homes of Patients with HIV and AIDS

Virginia Berrien, RN, MSN, – Universidad de Connecticut, EE.UU.

Abstract:

Certain diseases such as toxoplasmosis and cryptosporidiosis can be passed to humans via animal excreta. Bartonella infection may occur through scratching from a cat. Animals can also harbor mycobacterium avium and histoplasma. These infections may be more likely to occur when individuals are immune compromised through HIV infection and AIDS. Domestic animals, however, can be a source of comfort and an opportunity to provide care to another being when one is weak and chronically ill. Taking appropriate precautions can reduce the likelihood of acquiring these opportunistic infections and actually improve the quality of life of persons suffering from AIDS. These thoughts will be discussed along with agencies which provide help with caring for the pets in an advisory and financial capacity.