Brief Treatment Interruptions for Cure Studies Are Safe, Well-Tolerated

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A new study has shown that short treatment interruptions of antiretroviral (ARV) regimens are both safe and well-tolerated among people with HIV. This is good news for scientists pursuing functional cures because they can use such windows to study novel agents that would suppress the virus without an ARV regimen. University of Minnesota researchers presented their findings as a poster abstract at the IDWeek 2012 meeting in San Diego.

They studied 14 HIV-positive people with a CD4 count above 350 and an undetectable viral load, all of whom were on stable ARV regimens. After stopping the subjects' HIV medications, the researchers carefully monitored their CD4 counts and viral loads until HIV RNA was detectable in the blood, at which point the researchers took samples of the HIV reservoir, performed a genotyping test and then reinitiated ARVs. The average study participant took two weeks to reach a detectable viral load and another two weeks to reach full viral suppression once again. All subjects reached virologic suppression. None saw their CD4 levels change significantly; none suffered physical symptoms with the viral load's return; and none developed drug-resistance or experienced virologic failure.

To read the poster abstract, click here.