HIV Rebounds in Second Child Thought to Be Cured

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Echoing the disappointment of the "Mississippi baby" case, a second child has experienced viral rebound after it was suspected he was functionally cured of HIV, The Washington Post reports. In a case study published in The Lancet, researchers describe the case of a boy born to an HIV-positive mother in Milan, Italy, in December 2009 who, like the Mississippi baby, was put on an atypically aggressive regimen of antiretrovirals (ARVs) shortly after birth and who later showed no signs of the virus in his body, even in highly sensitive tests.

When the child was 3 years old, clinicians decided to take him off ARVs. He maintained an undetectable viral load for a week, but by the second week, he had a viral load of 36,840. His medical team put him back on ARVs, and he returned to having an undetectable viral load by standard tests.

The case differs from that of the Mississippi baby's in that, while the Milanese boy did not have HIV antibodies, he did show multiple signs of a response to HIV infection even after he had an undetectable viral load.

The researchers concluded that ARVs are unable to eradicate HIV because they do not wipe out viral reservoirs. Researchers once theorized that the Mississippi baby, who went 27 months without treatment before experiencing viral rebound just before turning 4 years old, was functionally cured because ARVs were able to prevent the establishment of the viral reservoir in the first place.

To read a press release about the case, click here.

To read the abstract of the case report, click here.

To read the Washington Post story, click here.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/Italy-viral-rebound-26275-2634