MAC Attack!

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Take a crowd of HIVers with MAC (*Mycobacterium avium* complex) -- one of AIDS' nastiest opportunistic infections (OIs) -- put 'em on effective HAART, and what do you get? No more need to keep popping those MAC-prevention pills! So it went at a Canada hospital, where 52 HIVers previously treated for the bad bacteria went off their MAC "maintenance therapy" after a year or two on the cocktail, at a CD4 count averaging 230. Nearly two years later, only one had had another MAC attack, and -- no coincidence -- that HIVer's HIV meds had failed. The largest and longest of its kind, this study confirms the happy trend that HAARTened HIVers can safely kick the habit of taking OI drugs. Stephen Shafran, MD, the study head, suggests that you can stop anti-MAC meds as long as your CD4s remain in the triple digits. But people, puh-lease don't go auctioning off your MAC pills on eBay before discussing discontinuation with Doc.

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