Ontario’s HIV Population Nears UN Care and Viral Suppression Targets

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The rates of people living with HIV in Ontario, Canada, who are in medical care and who have an undetectable viral load are nearing United Nations targets for what it would take to send the HIV epidemic into a significant retreat. Publishing their findings in the Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes, researchers examined records on 5,380 members of the Ontario HIV Treatment Network Cohort Study between 2001 and 2011.

The U.N. has called for 90 percent of world’s HIV population to be in care, 90 percent of that group to be on ARVs, and 90 percent of the treated group to have an undetectable viral load. (This means that 81 percent of all people with HIV would be in care and 72 percent would have a fully suppressed virus.)

In 2011, 87.3 percent of the Ontario study participants were in care, 77 percent were taking ARVs and 76 percent had a fully suppressed virus. The latter two rates rose over the course of the study.

These figures don’t neatly translate to the UN goals, because all members of the study were HIV diagnosed. If, however, one assumed that Ontario did have a 90 percent diagnosis rate and that the study cohort was a representative sample, the respective rates of those in the study who were in care and had a fully suppressed viral load would represent 79.6 percent and 68.4 percent of the total HIV population in Ontario. So these rates are really only just below the 81 percent and 72 percent targets—but would be lower if the actual diagnosis rate were below 90 percent. (The stats might also change if researchers identified a cohort more representative of the Ontario HIV population as a whole.)

To read the press release, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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