Pillow Talk

Scientists give HIV a killer case of insomnia

May 1, 2007 By James Wortman

Ever-adapting HIV can shut itself down and hibernate, maintaining a backup supply in the body that is impervious to existing drugs—which is one reason scientists have yet to discover a way to eradicate it. A study published in January by Princeton University researchers suggests that it may be possible to manipulate HIV's off switch, sparking hope for therapies that can both put HIV to sleep and wake it up, meaning antiretrovirals could have a crack at the body's entire viral load. While an approved therapy may still be 15 or 20 years away, David Margolis, MD, of the University of North Carolina, says, "This opens up all kinds of doors for treatment." He adds that positive people should work to keep their viral load down, so if and when a therapy does arrive, they can quickly wipe out HIV's slumbering reserves. The perfect wake-up call.

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