Quad Pill Measures Up to Two Other HIV Drug Regimens

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Ninety-six week data from two randomized clinical trials show that the single-pill, once-daily antiretroviral therapy Stribild (elvitegravir/cobicistat/emtricitabine/tenofovir), also known as the "Quad" pill, is as effective as both Atripla (efavirenz, emtricitabine, tenofovir) and a Reyataz plus Truvada combination (atazanavir plus emtricitabine/tenofovir), MedPage Today reports. Researchers recruited 1,408 HIV-positive study participants and randomly assigned 701 to receive Stribild, 352 to take Atripla and 355 to take Reyataz plus Truvada. They presented their findings at the 7th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2013) in Kuala Lumpur.

After 96 weeks of treatment, 84 percent of the participants taking Stribild achieved an undetectable viral load, compared with 82 percent experiencing full viral suppression in both of the other two therapy groups. These results were consistent regardless of age, sex, race and the participants' viral load and CD4 levels at the beginning of the study.

Stribild bested the other drug regimens in the side effects category, particularly when it came to Atripla's neuropsychiatric effects. Fourteen percent of those taking Atripla reported abnormal dreams, compared with 5 percent of those taking Reyataz and Truvada and just 1 percent of those taking Stribild. Four percent of those in the Atripla arm reported dizziness, compared with 1 percent of those in the other study arms.

The improvement in CD4 count when compared with the study's baseline was similar among the three arms, with those taking Stribild gaining an average of 275 CD4s, those taking Atripla gaining 273 cells and those in the Reyataz plus Truvada arm seeing an increase of 261 CD4s.

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