Sealed w/ KS

Purple badges may have merit

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Research indicating that PWAs who have Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) may develop AIDS more slowly than others got a lukewarm welcome from experts. The test-tube experiment at London's Institute of Cancer Research showed that KS-associated herpesvirus (KSHV) produces chemokine proteins that latch onto cell doorways and block the entrance of HIV. The Institute's Dr. Chris Boshoff said the "promiscuous" viral chemokines latch onto many different receptors, including CCR3, which helps usher HIV into brain cells. This, he said, could block the invasion of HIV into the brain, cutting down on dementia in PWAs with KS.

Not everyone agrees. "After 15 years of working with KS patients, I can't believe this finding has any clinical significance," said Dr. Alexandra Levine, of the University of Southern California's Norris Cancer Center. She called the results an interesting lab phenomenon, but, she said, "There's no way KS helps you as far as HIV. That's common sense."

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