Senior Strength

People over 60 respond well to HIV treatment.

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HIV-positive seniors may face more health challenges than their younger peers, but they need not worry about the efficacy of their antiretroviral therapy.

A new study conducted at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center showed that 67 percent of the 191 patients, who averaged 65 years old, had an undetectable viral load and had CD4s 200 points above pre-treatment levels. These results are similar to those seen in younger people living with HIV.

However, people diagnosed before they were 50 had better CD4 responses than those diagnosed later in life—a difference, according to study author Mariam Aziz, MD, that could be due to delayed entry into care.

"Some providers may find it difficult to treat older patients, given the risk involved with comorbidities," she says. "[The Rush findings] reinforce the need for widespread routine HIV testing so that [people] will be diagnosed and linked to care earlier."

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