HIV Essentially Doubles Aging's Effect on Heart Attack Risk

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Every decade spent living with HIV is equivalent to an additional 10 years of ordinary aging's contribution to heart attack risk, aidsmap reports. Researchers analyzed data from eight cohorts including nearly 18,500 European and North American HIV-positive members of the CASCADE collaboration in EuroCoord. They presented their findings at the 15th European AIDS Conference in Barcelona, Spain.

The participants contributed more than 128,000 person-years of follow-up (person-years are the cumulative years participants are followed in a study). During the study, 116 people had a heart attack.

After adjusting the data for the effects of age, whether individuals had ever taken Crixivan (indinavir) or Kaletra (lopinavir/ritonavir), or whether they currently took Ziagen (abacavir), the researchers found that every decade of having HIV translated to a substantial increase in the risk of a heart attack. Those living with the virus for five years or less had a yearly heart attack rate of 0.043 percent; those HIV-positive for a decade or longer had an annual rate of 0.086 percent. The annual rate rose to 0.106 percent and 0.265 percent for those living with HIV for 10 to 15 years and more than 15 years, respectively.

Viral load was not related to heart attack risk, but those with a CD4 count below 100 had a much greater risk of a heart attack, at 0.452 percent per year, than those with higher CD4 counts.

After adjusting for age, exposure to antiretroviral treatment, current CD4 count, and lowest-ever CD4 count, the researchers found that living with HIV for a decade had a similar impact on heart attack risk as aging for the same amount of time. So if someone contracts HIV at 30, by 40 he would have about the heart attack risk that an HIV-negative individual would have at age 50.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

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