“Functional” AIDS Cure Attainable

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Although it has been a goal difficult to achieve, positive people could live symptom-free without medications if aggressive treatment is started at pivotal times and if newer drugs can control the disease, the chief of U.S. infectious disease research said August 6 at the XVII International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, Bloomberg reports.

“I believe we will be able to, in some patients, not very many, eradicate HIV microbiologically and we will have a functional cure in others,” said Anthony Fauci, MD, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. “But this will likely require aggressive drug regimens and rely on the timing of initiating therapy.”

Treating patients soon after they are infected may protect the immune system and suppress the virus so patients can slowly stop taking the drugs, Dr. Fauci said.

Continued investment from the pharmaceutical industry, something that may be waning, is needed to parlay current drugs into preventative treatments, said Peter Piot, MD, executive director of UNAIDS, in a speech at the conference.

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