Irregular Heartbeat Risk Tied to Advanced HIV

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More advanced HIV disease is associated with an increased risk of atrial fibrillation (afib), which is the most common form of irregular heartbeat, or cardiac arrhythmia, MedPage Today reports. Researchers from the University of California, San Francisco analyzed a national sample of 30,533 HIV-positive veterans in the Department of Veterans Affairs HIV Clinical Case Registry, spanning 1996 through 2011. They published their findings in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

Across a median follow-up period of 6.8 years, 780 (2.6 percent) of the study subjects developed afib, yielding an incidence rate of 3.6 cases per 1,000 person-years. After controlling for other risk factors, the investigators found that having a CD4 count less than 200 raised the risk of developing afib by 40 percent compared with having a CD4 count above 350. A viral load above 100,000 raised the risk of afib by 70 percent compared with a viral load below 500.

Additional risk factors independently associated with developing the arrhythmia included advanced age, white race, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, alcoholism, proteinuria, reduced kidney function and hypothyroidism.

To read the MedPage Today report, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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