Effective Two-Drug HIV Regimen Sets Stage for Long-Acting Treatment

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For those with fully suppressed HIV, switching to a two-drug regimen of once-daily cabotegravir and Edurant (rilpivirine) works as well taking a Sustiva (efavirenz)–based triple regimen. Researchers in the Phase IIb LATTE trial of 243 treatment-naive HIV-positive participants presented their findings at 2015 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Seattle.

The participants were randomly assigned to begin the trial either with one of three potential doses of the next-generation integrase inhibitor cabotegravir (10, 30 or 60 milligrams), or with 600mg of Sustiva, along with two nucleoside/nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NRTIs, or nukes). After 24 weeks, the 87 percent (160 people) of those taking cabotegravir who had stable viral suppression swapped the non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NNRTI, or non-nuke) Edurant for two NRTIs. Meanwhile, 47 people taking Sustiva also continued into the maintenance phase of the study.

As previously reported, 82 percent of all of the participants who started the cabotegravir regimen and 71 percent of those on the Sustiva regimen still had an undetectable viral load 48 weeks into the study. The difference between these figures was not statistically significant, meaning it could have occurred by chance.

At this year's CROI, the researchers reported that 76 percent of the entire cabotegravir group and 63 percent of those in the Sustiva group maintained viral suppression for 96 weeks. Among those who entered the post-24 week maintenance phase of the trial, a respective 86 percent and 83 percent maintained an undetectable viral load.

These findings supports research into long-acting, injectable versions of cabotegravir and Edurant, which would allow for monthly or quarterly dosing.

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