Individual HIV Meds Are Just as Effective as Combo Pills

May 4, 2015

Multi-antiretroviral (ARV) combination tablets appear to combat HIV no better than regimens that include individual tablets, aidsmap reports. Researchers conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of nine trials comparing single-table regimens with their individual-tablet equivalents, which included 2,568 HIV-positive participants. They presented their findings at the British HIV Association conference in Brighton, England.

Five trials compared Epzicom with its components, Ziagen (abacavir) and Epivir (lamivudine), plus a protease inhibitor or a non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor. Four trials compared Atripla (efavirenz/tenofovir/emtricitabine), Stribild (elvitegravir/cobicistat/tenofovir/emtricitabine) and Complera (rilpivirine/tenofovir/emtricitabine) with regimens including three or four individual tablets.

All of the single-tablet regimen comparison trials included virally suppressed participants switching from stable ARV treatment to a new regimen.

The rate of virologic failure, defined as having a viral load above 400 in two consecutive tests, was comparable between those taking combination tablets and those taking individual tablets. Also, there was no significant difference in the rate of drug resistance or of people switching treatment because of side effects.

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