



Concerns: Abacavir

Current abacavir users had a 50% higher risk for cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes.

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Current or previous use of the antiretroviral drug abacavir (sold alone as Ziagen and a component of older combination pills) is associated with an elevated risk of major cardiovascular events, such as heart attacks and strokes, according to an analysis from the large REPRIEVE trial. This international study enrolled nearly 7,800 HIV-positive people ages 40 to 75 who had an undetectable viral load and low-to-moderate cardiovascular disease risk. The main study finding was that a daily statin medication reduced the risk of major cardiovascular events by 35%. The study team also assessed whether certain antiretrovirals previously linked to heart problems were associated with these events. Overall, 13% of participants were currently taking abacavir, and 22% reported prior use. Current abacavir users had a 50% higher risk for cardiovascular events, and former users had a 42% elevated risk compared to those with no exposure. Use of other antiretrovirals, including tenofovir, AZT and protease inhibitors, was not associated with any changes in cardiovascular event risk.

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