Concerns: COVID-19 Risk

Studies of COVID-19 risk among people with HIV continue to reach different conclusions.

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Studies of COVID-19 risk among people with HIV continue to reach different conclusions. An analysis from the World Health Organization looked at data from more than 15,000 people with HIV, mostly in South Africa, who were hospitalized with COVID-19. Having HIV was associated with a 13% higher risk for severe illness and a 30% higher risk for death. Another analysis from the United States included more than 21,500 adults hospitalized with COVID-19, of whom 220 were HIV positive. HIV was not independently associated with mortality: 16% of HIV-positive and 15% of HIV-negative people died. Having HIV also was not associated with severity of illness or length of hospital stay. Both analyses were limited by lack of information about HIV treatment or CD4 count. But another study found that a lower CD4 count and a detectable viral load were associated with more severe COVID-19. In August, U.S. health officials recommended a third COVID-19 vaccine dose for immunocompromised people, including those with advanced or untreated HIV.

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