Concerns: Liver Fibrosis

HIV was linked to an increased prevalence of liver fibrosis in a recent study.

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Liver fibrosis, or buildup of scar tissue, is more common among people with HIV than HIV-negative individuals, according to recent research. Liver fibrosis and cirrhosis (the most advanced stage of fibrosis) can be caused by hepatitis B or C, heavy alcohol use or fatty liver disease, but HIV infection and antiretroviral treatment may also play a role. Danish researchers compared 342 people with HIV and 2,190 HIV-negative individuals between 50 and 70 years old; none of them had hepatitis B or C. Almost all of the HIV-positive people were taking antiretroviral therapy, and most had an undetectable viral load. Transient elastography (FibroScan) was used to assess liver stiffness, an indicator of fibrosis. Elevated liver stiffness was more common among people with HIV (12%) compared with HIV-negative people (7%). Greater liver stiffness was also linked to older age, higher body mass index, elevated ALT liver enzyme levels and exposure to ddI (Videx), an older HIV drug known to cause liver problems.

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