Younger People With HIV Are Less Connected to Care

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Troubling disparities in access to care among younger people living with HIV signal a need to better target this group with both testing and optimum care strategies, MedPage Today reports. Publishing their findings online in JAMA Internal Medicine, investigators from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) sought to better understand the demographic subtleties of the "continuum of HIV care" in the United States. They analyzed 2009 data from the National HIV Surveillance System and drew from the CDC's Medical Monitoring Project.

The team estimated that about 1.1 million Americans were living with HIV in 2009, of which nearly 82 percent were diagnosed, 66 percent linked to care, 37 percent retained in care, 33 percent prescribed antiretrovirals and 25 percent were suppressing the virus. (This phenomenon, a hot topic over the past two years, is known as the "treatment cascade.")

An estimated 857,276 Americans did not have a fully suppressed viral load, including 75 percent of the HIV-positive men, 79 percent of African Americans, 74 percent of Latinos and 70 percent of whites.

Among people living with the virus who were between 13 and 24 years old, just 41 percent were diagnosed and 31 percent linked to care. Those in age groups between 25 and 34 years old, 35 and 44 years old and 45 and 54 years old were all significantly less likely to have a fully suppressed viral load than those between the ages of 55 and 64.

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