Cure: 15-Year Remission of HIV

A Barcelona woman has maintained an undetectable HIV viral load for more than 15 years after stopping antiretroviral treatment.

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A Barcelona woman has maintained an undetectable HIV viral load for more than 15 years after stopping antiretroviral treatment, researchers reported at the 24th International AIDS Conference. The woman was diagnosed with HIV during acute infection at age 59. She joined a small clinical trial testing a combination of immune-modulating therapies, including the immunosuppressive drug cyclosporine and three cytokines, chemical messengers that promote immune cell proliferation and activity. She undertook a planned treatment interruption, but her HIV did not rebound after stopping antiretrovirals. HIV RNA in her blood remained undetectable, and she experienced a progressive reduction in the hidden reservoir of inactive virus. What's more, she had specific types of natural killer cells and CD8 T-cells that play a role in controlling HIV. The woman's HIV is not completely eradicated—so she cannot be considered cured in the strictest sense—but her long-term remission may provide clues to help scientists develop strategies for a functional cure.

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