Cure: Curious Cohort on Early Treatment

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A group of HIV-positive French individuals—14 at last count—may be yet another piece of the cure puzzle. Comprising the VISCONTI cohort, they were all started on HIV treatment within 10 weeks of becoming infected, remained on therapy for an average of three years, and have subsequently stayed off treatment for roughly six years, all the while maintaining undetectable viral loads.

They're not "elite controllers"—they don't have the same immunologic characteristics as those able to naturally control the infection—and their prolonged time off treatment makes them unique among other early treaters.

Have these individuals been "functionally cured," whereby HIV is still present but effectively controlled without the need for meds? Nobody has declared them as such. But they're a model for this approach as scientists continue to tease out what separates these individuals from the rest.

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