



Cure: Cure for Babies?

Findings from a study of 54 babies born with HIV suggest that starting antiretrovirals within the first days of life may lead to sustained viral control.

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Infants who start antiretroviral therapy (ART) very early may be able to maintain viral suppression after stopping treatment. In 2013, researchers reported on the Mississippi Baby, an infant born with HIV who started antiretrovirals 30 hours after birth. Her treatment was stopped at 18 months, but she maintained viral suppression for more than two years off ART. Now, the same team has reported findings from a study of 54 babies born with HIV, suggesting that starting antiretrovirals within the first days of life may lead to sustained viral control. The researchers estimated that infants born to mothers who were not on ART had a 33% chance of maintaining viral suppression after stopping antiretrovirals, while those born to mothers on treatment had a 57% chance. Among the children with an undetectable plasma HIV RNA viral load at age 2, a majority also had no detectable HIV DNA, indicating a very small or nonexistent viral reservoir. However, the children have not yet stopped treatment to see whether they achieved a functional cure.

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