Cure: Delaying Rebound

Scientists tested the effects of the broadly neutralizing antibody PGT121 and the immune-stimulating agent GS-9620 in monkeys.

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A recent study conducted in primates has raised hopes of provoking extended periods of viral remission, also known as posttreatment control of HIV, among humans living with the virus. Researchers infected 44 rhesus monkeys with SHIV, a simian version of HIV, and gave them 96 weeks of antiretroviral (ARV) treatment starting on day seven of infection. Then, keeping the animals on ARVs, the researchers put them through a period of combination treatment with the broadly neutralizing antibody PGT121 and the immune-stimulating agent (specifically known as a TLR7 agonist) GS-9620. Next, the monkeys were taken off all treatment. During the time that followed, compared with animals that received placebos instead of PGT121 and GS-9620, the monkeys that received those drugs saw a median delay in their viral rebound of 112 days. The dual-treated animals all experienced a much more muted viral spike during their rebound, and their viral loads all settled down to a plateau below 400.

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