Cure: HDAC Inhibitors May Need Combos

December 19, 2012 By Benjamin Ryan

Scientists have achieved a proof-of-concept that cancer drugs known as histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors can flush HIV out of the long-elusive reservoirs where it hides out, latent, even during antiretroviral therapy. Histone deacetylase is an enzyme that helps suppress RNA expression in HIV, preventing ARVs from identifying and attacking the virus. Inhibiting these enzymes would be a key to flushing HIV out of hiding. Nancie Archin, PhD, and a team from the lab of David Margolis, MD, at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine have proved such an effect is possible with their study of eight people with HIV who each received three doses of the HDAC inhibitor Zolinza (vorinostat). Many questions about the efficacy and proper use of HDAC inhibitors remain, including concerns about potential toxicities and whether the drugs must be taken in combination with other agents to create a full cure. But this adds a vital piece of know-how to the vast puzzle of cure research.

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