Researchers Hoping to Replicate Case of Functionally Cured Child

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Following on the heels of the case of the Mississippi child apparently functionally cured of HIV, a group of scientists is laying the groundwork for an attempt to replicate the case in other children, Nature Medicine reports. The research team that announced the findings about the child in March will meet with other scientists in May at a retreat of the International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials (IMPAACT) group, which is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). At the retreat, they will strategize study protocols to possibly take children born with HIV off antiretrovirals (ARVs) if they have undetectable viral loads.

Firstly, the researchers hope to launch a pilot study with about two dozen babies born to HIV-positive mothers who did not receive ARVs during pregnancy. They would study risks and benefits of the aggressive ARV treatment the Mississippi baby received shortly after birth.

Meanwhile, researchers also see possibilities in a study presented at the 20th Conference of Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Atlanta by Katherine Luzuriaga, MD, from the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, who is on the research team studying the functionally cured baby. She looked at five people who were started on ARVs before they were three months old in the mid-1990s and found that four have neither detectable virus nor HIV antibodies in their bloodstreams. Luzuriaga told Nature Medicine that “it may be reasonable to consider a trial off therapy for these kids.”

To read the Nature Medicine article, click here.

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