Cure: Revamp Research?

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In an essay in The Lancet, two prominent HIV researchers, including HIV co-discoverer Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, call for revising the way cure research is conducted. They encourage colleagues to move away from studying individual agents and to leverage a new system that would allow researchers to shift quickly into testing the combination treatment approaches that are likely necessary to develop a cure. In the current research paradigm, individual therapies are tested for safety and potency in animals, and, if promising, move into human trials—first to test safety, then efficacy. This time-consuming process must be repeated when therapies are used in combination. The essay authors outline a pathway by which scientists could run parallel animal and human studies, by first selecting the most promising combinations of treatments from lab research as well as existing animal- and human-related data. This could allow scientists to work more efficiently and enter combination therapies into Phase II human trials much faster.

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