Low CD4s, Not Viral Load, Increase Risk of Non-AIDS Diseases for Those Off Treatment

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People with untreated HIV whose CD4s drop below 350 have more than twice the risk of developing serious non-AIDS diseases as those with levels above 500, while their viral load seems unrelated to the risk, the National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project reports. Presenting their findings at the 20th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Atlanta, researchers analyzed a group of 13,000 people from the ATHENA study in the Netherlands who were diagnosed with HIV in 1998 or after and who were not taking antiretrovirals (ARVs). They looked for new diagnoses of major cardiovascular diseases, including myocardial infarction, stroke and invasive coronary procedures, as well as liver fibrosis or cirrhosis and non-AIDS-defining cancers (NADCs).

During 18,641 person-years of follow-up, 208 people (1.6 percent) developed one of the three categories of non-AIDS diseases. These included 82 NADCs, 79 cases of liver disease and 53 incidents of cardiovascular disease. There was an overall likelihood that 6 percent of those with a CD4 count below 200 would receive a diagnosis of one of these non-AIDS diseases each year. Compared with people who had CD4s above 500, those with a CD4 count below 200 had more than four times the increased risk, and those with CD4s between 200 and 349 had more than twice the increased risk for developing non-AIDS diseases.

Viral load did not appear to affect the risk of developing non-AIDS diseases.

To read the NATAP report, click here.

To read the conference poster, click here.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/disease-risk-23704-2625