First Alzheimer’s Case in Someone With HIV

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Clinicians have reported the first case of a person living with HIV who has received a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease, a 71-year-old man diagnosed after a PET scan showed deposited protein fragments called amyloid in his brain.

Some clinicians have theorized that people with HIV might not develop Alzheimer’s because HIV-related inflammation in the brain may prevent the formation of amyloid clumps. This man’s diagnosis could be an indicator of what is to come for an aging HIV population.

The report suggests that some older people living with HIV and dementia may be incorrectly diagnosed with HIV-associated neurocognitive disorders (HAND) when in fact they are developing Alzheimer’s disease.

Additionally, according to R. Scott Turner, MD, PhD, the head of the Georgetown University Memory Disorders Program, “This case may be the shot across the bow of a new epidemic of mixed dementia,” referring to those who may develop both HAND and Alzheimer’s.

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