Gum Disease Can Lead Dormant HIV to Replicate

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The byproducts of bacteria in gum disease can awaken dormant HIV-infected cells, causing the virus to replicate. Publishing their findings in the journal Virology, researchers studied the effects on HIV replication in latently infected immune cells of five metabolic small-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) that are byproducts of two oral bacteria: Porphyromonas gingivalis and Fusobacterium nucleatum.

In a previous study, the researchers found that that another SCFA, butyric acid, prompted a process that ultimately reactivated the virus that is associated with AIDS-defining cancer Kaposi's sarcoma. In this study, the researchers broadened their research to include all SCFAs. They discovered that a high level of butyric acid activates latently HIV-infected cells, as does the cumulative effect of smaller levels of all five of the SCFAs they studied.

The findings highlight the importance of proper and routine dental care for people living with HIV.

To read a Case Western Reserve University blog about the study, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/gum-disease-26715-1180