Healthy Hearts

People living with HIV are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease.

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Although people living with HIV have as much as double the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) compared with the general population, they can likely mitigate this risk through traditional preventive measures.

Researchers created a mathematical model to predict CVD over time among people with HIV. They based their model on nearly 9,000 people on HIV treatment in the Netherlands.

According to the model, between 2015 and 2030, the annual rate of CVD diagnosis among the cohort members will increase by 55 percent. Helping smokers quit would prevent an estimated 13 percent of the cases of CVD during this period. Intensifying the monitoring and treatment of high blood pressure and abnormal blood lipid levels, including cholesterol, would avert 20 percent of the CVD cases.

“This work highlights the importance of having regular and effective interactions with treating physicians,” says the study’s lead author, Mikaela Smit, PhD, a research fellow at the Imperial College London School of Public Health. “The emphasis is on ensuring that patients are regularly assessed for CVD risk factors, which may include being screened and effectively treated for high blood pressure and high cholesterol, especially if they are at high risk for CVD.”

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