HIV Meds Have Prevented Opportunistic Infections on a Massive Scale in Poorer Nations

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Antiretroviral (ARV) treatment in low- and middle-income nations has prevented nearly 1 million cases of opportunistic infections (OIs), saving close to $50 million annually, aidsmap reports. Publishing their findings in Clinical Infectious Diseases, researchers conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 126 studies reporting on OI incidence among 491,608 HIV-positive adults between 1990 and 2013.

The greatest reduction in OI rates was observed during the first year of ARV treatment, when treatment reduced incidence by 57 to 91 percent. Oral thrush risk was reduced by 91 percent, toxoplasmosis by 88 percent and pneumocystis pneumonia (PCP) by 87 percent. Unspecified tuberculosis (TB) rates fell by 57 percent, and pulmonary TB rates fell by 62 percent during the first year of ARVs. After that first year, pulmonary TB rates fell by a further 87 percent, and unspecified TB rates fell by a further 74 percent.

The researchers estimated that using ARVs before CD4s dropped to 200 prevented 857,828 cases of OIs, for an estimated cost savings of $46.7 million.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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