Vaccine Researchers Create HIV Strain to Infect Monkeys

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By altering a single gene in HIV, scientists have created a strain of the virus that can infect and multiply in monkeys, which may help researchers better test future vaccines in monkeys before they proceed to human trials, Reuters reports.

Researchers announced March 2 that the new strain of HIV—called simian-tropic HIV-1 or stHIV-1—will be able to infect a type of monkey called a pig-tailed macaque. While previous research in monkeys has revolved around a "cousin" virus to HIV called simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV), that virus is not a perfect substitute for testing HIV drugs and vaccines.

"If our research is taken further, we hope that one day, perhaps in the not-too-distant future, we'll be able to make vaccines that are intended for use in humans and the very same product will be able to be tested in animals before human trials," said researcher Paul Bieniasz from the Rockefeller University in New York.

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