A 15-Year Jump in Life Expectancy for People With HIV

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American and Canadian people whose HIV is treated with antiretrovirals (ARVs) enjoyed an increase in life expectancy of 15 years between the time periods of 2000 to 2002 and 2006 to 2007. Non-whites and those who began ARVs with a CD4 count below 350 also experienced gains, although they weren't as great by comparison. Researchers studied nearly 23,000 people with HIV who started ARVs between 2000 and 2007. The findings were presented at the 7th International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention (IAS 2013) in Kuala Lumpur, and they were reported by the National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project (NATAP).

Between 2000 and 2002, the study population's average life expectancy past age 20 was 36 years, meaning they could expect to live to the age of 56. By 2003 to 2005, this figure had risen to 45 years for a total age of 65 years old, and by 2006 to 2007 it had risen to 51 years, meaning a 20-year-old could expect to live to 71.

By the last study period, men's life expectancy outpaced women's, with a respective 53 and 47 years past age 20. Gay men's life expectancy rose from 53 years past age 20 in the first study period, to 57 years in the second and 69 in the third.

Injection drug users, however, saw no improvement, with respective life expectancies of 29, 31 and 29.

Whites had a relatively stable life expectancy during this period, increasing from 52.7 to 53.6 years between the first and last study periods. Non-whites, meanwhile, enjoyed gains, but not enough to erase a racial divide in life expectancy, with respective figures of 30, 41 and 48 years.

Those who began ARVs with CD4s below 350 lagged behind those who began therapy earlier, with respective life expectancies of 31 vs. 49 years, 41 vs. 59 years and 47 vs. 69 years.

To read the NATAP story, click here.

To read the conference abstract, click here.

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