Life Expectancy for Young People With HIV Is Nearly Normal

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In the United States and Canada, the last decade saw life expectancies for young people living with HIV raise dramatically, to almost normal levels, the Huffington Post reports. Publishing their findings in PLOS ONE, investigators drew a sample of just under 23,000 people with HIV ages 20 or older from the North American AIDS Cohort Collaboration, covering January 1, 2000, to December 31, 2007.

There were 1,622 deaths in the cohort, which contributed 82,022 person years to the study, for a crude mortality rate of 19.8 per 1,000 person years. During 2000 to 2002, the life expectancy for a 20-year-old was an additional 36 years. By 2006 to 2007, this figure had leapt to 51 years, so that a 20-year-old could, on average, expect to live into his or her early 70s—almost as long as the general population.

There were key differences in life expectancies between the different subpopulations. There were no significant gender differences in life expectancy except in the 2006 to 2007 period, when the women reached 47 additional years of life expectancy past age 20 and the men 53. Men who have sex with men (MSM) had an expected 69 years of life past 20 by the end of the study period, compared with 29 years for injection drug users—whose life expectancy was essentially flatlined at around 30 years past 20. Non-whites, while still trailing whites, made significant headway in closing the gap. Whites began the study with 53 years and ended it with 57 years of life expectancy past 20, while non-whites started with 30 years and ended with 48. Those with a CD4 count of at least 350, measured when they began, or within six months of beginning, antiretrovirals, had 69 years of life expectancy past 20 in the final period of the study, compared with 47 years for those with CD4 levels below this threshold.

To read the study, click here.

To read the Huffington Post story, click here.

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