Treatment: Loneliness and HIV Med Adherence

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Loneliness and depression can lead to lower adherence to antiretroviral treatment, according to recent research. One study, which included nearly 2,000 people living with HIV in Canada, found that those who reported frequent loneliness were more likely to miss medication doses. Almost half said they felt moderately to extremely lonely over the course of follow-up, which included the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women, younger people, those with lower incomes and single, widowed or divorced people were more likely to experience loneliness. The second study evaluated treatment adherence among 557 HIV--positive men who have sex with men in Taiwan, 14% of whom experienced depression. Men with depression reported worse overall quality of life and were more than twice as likely to say they didn't always take their antiretrovirals consistently. But among those taking antidepressants, there was no significant difference in adherence. Ongoing research is looking at strategies to improve social connections and combat depression.

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