It May Be Possible to Take Atripla Just Three Times a Week

July 12, 2016

People with well controlled HIV who cut back on taking Atripla (efavirenz/tenofovir disoproxil fumarate/emtricitabine) from daily to three times a week maintained an undetectable viral load for six months, aidsmap reports. Researchers conducted an analysis of 61 HIV-positive people taking once-daily Atripla who had an undetectable viral load for at least two years, had never developed virologic failure and had no known resistance to Atripla's components. They presented their findings at the ASM Microbe 2016 conference in Boston.

The participants were randomly assigned to continue taking daily Atripla or to take it only every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 24 weeks. Researchers measured their viral loads at the study's outset and at weeks 12 and 24 in both study arms as well as at weeks 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 in the three-times-per-week arm.

The treatment was well tolerated, with everyone completing the study. According to patient questionnaires and pill counts the participants adhered well to their regimens.

No one in the study developed virologic failure, nor did anyone develop a detectable viral load, even according to a single-copy assay.

At the end of the study, scores on the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index improved among those taking Atripla three times a week. (The efavirenz component of Atripla is notorious for causing sleep disturbances.)

Those taking Atripla less frequently saw their femur bone density scores increase slightly, although their lumbar spine density did not change. They also experienced an improvement in their kidney biomarkers. Cholesterol levels rose among those taking Atripla less frequently, although to a lesser extent than among those taking the HIV treatment daily.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

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