Medicaid Enrollees With HIV Often Discontinue Treatment for Lengthy Periods

A new study found that 44% of such individuals who stopped antiretroviral treatment did not restart therapy within 18 months.

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Among HIV-positive individuals covered by Medicaid, a considerable proportion who go off their antiretroviral (ARV) treatment do not restart therapy within 18 months, Healio reports.

Tingting Zhang, PhD, an assistant professor at Brown University, and colleagues conducted a retrospective cohort study in which they analyzed data on 103,885 HIV-positive Medicaid enrollees spanning 2001 to 2012.

A total of 45,409 of the people with HIV discontinued ARV treatment at some point. Forty-four percent of them did not go back on treatment for the virus within 18 months.

The study authors found that being younger, being a woman, having two or more non-HIV health conditions and having a mental health diagnosis were all associated with not restarting ARV treatment within 18 months.

Among those who reinitiated HIV treatment within 18 months, the median time between their going off therapy and going back on was eight months. Attending three or more clinic visits or being hospitalized during the follow-up period were associated with restarting treatment.

Such time off treatment, research has shown, is associated with various negative health outcomes. Consequently, the new study's authors called for the use of interventions that focus on young people and women in particular in an effort to reengage and retain them in medical care for HIV.

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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