Missing Appointments Post-HIV Diagnosis Raises Risk of Death

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Those who miss one or more medical appointments during the first year after being diagnosed with HIV have a much higher risk of death than those who see their care provider as scheduled, according to Kaiser Permanente. The findings stress the importance of retaining people with HIV in medical care. Researchers at Kaiser Permanente studied electronic records of more than 2,800 people who tested positive for HIV in Northern California between January 1997 and December 2007.

Those who missed at least one visit during their first year after diagnosis had an average 71 percent higher risk of death when compared with those who missed no visits. For each missed visit, the risk of death increased 12 percent. (The implication is not necessarily that those who skipped appointments were more likely to die in the short term, but that by not engaging in proper HIV care they were more likely to die as years passed.)

Those younger than 60 were 69 percent more likely to miss visits than those older than 60. When compared with whites, blacks were 54 percent and Latinos 48 percent more likely to miss visits. When compared with those with CD4s above 500, those with CD4s between 100 and 199 were 43 percent more likely to miss visits, those with CD4s between 50 and 99 were 39 percent more likely, and those with CD4s below 50 were 63 percent more likely.

To read the study abstract, click here.

To read the Kaiser Permanente release, click here.

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