Success on HIV Therapy Means Normal Mortality Risk

June 6, 2013

People with HIV who take antiretrovirals and maintain an undetectable viral load and a CD4 count of at least 500 appear to have no increased risk of death when compared with their HIV-negative peers, aidsmap reports. Publishing their findings in the journal AIDS, researchers analyzed data from two large, randomized controlled trials, called SMART and ESPRIT. They studied 3,280 HIV-positive adults between the ages of 20 and 70 whose recent tests had shown an undetectable viral load and a CD4 count at or above 350. Injection drug users were excluded.

Eighty percent of the participants were men, and about half came from the United States. The median age at the baseline of the study was 43 years. Four percent were coinfected with hepatitis B virus and 8 percent with hepatitis C virus. The study had 12,357 person-years of follow-up.

Among the 62 deaths during the study, the most common cause was cardiovascular disease or sudden death (19 people, or 31 percent), followed by non-AIDS cancers (12 people, 19 percent). Just two deaths (3 percent) were related to AIDS.

For those with a CD4 count between 350 and 499, there was an estimated 77 percent increased risk of death when compared with the general population. However, there was no mortality risk associated with having a CD4 count above 500 when the viral load was also undetectable.

To read the aidsmap story, click here.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/mortality-risk-24048-7370