Treatment: Near-Normal Life Expectancy

March 26, 2014 By Benjamin Ryan

Life expectancy for young people taking HIV therapy has soared to nearly normal levels. Studying a sample of almost 23,000 adults living with HIV, researchers found that during 2000 to 2002 the average life expectancy for an HIV-positive 20-year-old on antiretrovirals (ARVs) was an additional 36 years. By 2006 to 2007, this figure had leapt to 51 years. During the latter period, men who have sex with men could expect 69 years past age 20 on average, compared with just 29 years for injection drug users. Those with CD4s above 350 within six months of beginning HIV treatment also had 69 years of life expectancy past age 20 at the study's end, compared with just 47 years for those who started ARVs with CD4s below this threshold. People of color, although still trailing whites, made significant headway in closing the gap, starting the study with 30 extra years and ending with 48, while whites began with 53 more years and ended with 57.

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