Why This New Strawberry-Flavored HIV Med Is a Game Changer

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Until last month, HIV drugs for babies and toddlers came in hard-to-swallow pills or yucky-tasting syrups. But now, Cipla, a manufacturer of generic drugs in India, has created Quadrimune. Its pediatric formulation comes in strawberry-flavored granules that allow it to be sprinkled on food or mixed in milk, reports The New York Times.

What's more, the drug will likely be priced at $1 a day.

The med could save thousands of lives each year, notably in Africa, where nearly 80,000 babies die annually because of HIV.

"This is excellent news for all children living with HIV," Winnie Byanyima, the executive director of United Nations AIDS agency UNAIDS, told the Times. "We have been eagerly waiting for child-friendly medicines that are easy to use and good to taste."

A research arm of Doctors Without Borders is conducting a clinical trial of the med on HIV-positive infants (it has been tested in adults). And the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which approves meds for use in the United States, is currently reviewing Quadrimune. FDA approval means that the World Health Organization would likely certify it as well—possibly as soon as spring 2020.

Check out the Times article for more about Cipla and pediatric HIV meds.

In related POZ news, see "Rapidly Treating Infants Born With HIV Shrinks the Viral Reservoir." And to learn more about Byanyima, see the August article "Meet the New Leader of the United Nations AIDS Program."

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