Reports of Imminent HIV Cure, Once Again, Are False

The latest collection of articles stems from a tiny study in Uganda, neither peer-reviewed nor presented at a conference.

November 12, 2018 By Benjamin Ryan

An Israeli biotech company's misleading press release about a recent tiny study in Uganda is apparently to blame for the latest case of media outlets reporting false promises of a cure for HIV, aidsmap reports.

The company, Zion Medical, conducted a study of nine people with HIV in the sub-Saharan African nation. Its study has neither been published in a peer-reviewed journal nor presented at a scientific conference. (It is vital for scientific studies to meet either criterion in order to be considered valid.) No regulatory agency has registered the study.

For the first four weeks of the study, the participants received a new medication called Gammora. At the end of this period, according to Zion Medical's press release, "most patients showed a significant reduction of the viral load of up to 90 percent from the baseline drug." In other words, between five and eight of the nine participants experienced a decline in viral load as great as 90 percent (also known as 1 log10) but not greater.

At the four-week mark, the participants also received a standard antiretroviral regimen. After a subsequent four weeks, the participants achieved a viral load below 300, including up to a 99 percent reduction in viral load since the start of the study.

Such a result is in line with what would be expected from any standard ARV trial, which is certainly no coincidence, since the participants were in fact receiving standard ARVs.

According to Zion Medical's press release, "Gammora is a synthetic peptide compound derived from the HIV enzyme integrase" and works by triggering infected cells to self-destruct in a process known as apoptosis.

To cure HIV, a treatment must drain what is known as the viral reservoir, the collection of unreplicating infected cells that remain under the radar of ARVs, which only work on replicating cells. Zion Medical's study shows no indication that Gammora had any effect on the viral reservoir. Therefore, the company's press release provides no valid reason to consider Gammora a

potentially curative therapy for HIV.

To read a POZ feature article on the current state of the HIV cure research field, click here.

To read a POZ feature article about apoptosis in the context of HIV infection, click here.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/reports-imminent-hiv-cure-false