Review Identifies Age-Related Illnesses To Which People With HIV Are Prone

Investigators conducted a review of 20 studies covering 55 health outcomes, looking for those associated with HIV.

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A new umbrella review of several studies has identified a roster of aging-related health conditions that are associated with HIV.

Publishing their findings in Clinical Infectious Diseases, researchers at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge and the Medical University of Vienna reviewed 20 observational studies that covered HIV's potential association with 55 health outcomes.

The review revealed that five of the outcomes had a statistically significant association with HIV, meaning the outcome is unlikely to have been driven by chance. These include shortness of breath, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD, a chronic inflammatory lung disease that obstructs airflow to the lungs), maternal sepsis, anemia and bone fractures. Three conditions had a highly statistically significant association with HIV, including cough, pregnancy-related mortality and ischemic heart disease, which is caused by the narrowing of arteries.

"By pooling data from different studies, we've been able to show for the first time that even with the rise in life expectancy amongst people living with HIV, this population now seems to be disproportionately affected by chronic illnesses often attributable to lifestyle issues such as smoking, drug and alcohol use, or more commonly associated with an older population," said Lee Smith, PhD, a reader in physical activity and public health at Anglia Ruskin University, in a press release.

"We're unable to say for certain which are caused or exacerbated by HIV and its treatment, and which are related to lifestyle," said Smith. "However, the elevated risk levels highlighted in our study should hopefully lead to further research to improve both the prevention and early detection of these comorbidities in people living with HIV. Public health bodies worldwide should reflect on these findings."

To read the study, click here.

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