

# Switching HIV Meds to Biktarvy Is Safe, Effective Among Seniors

Pooled results from recent studies found a high rate of full viral suppression and no major safety concerns.

July 6, 2020 By [Benjamin Ryan](#)

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People with HIV who are 65 years old or older who switched their antiretroviral (ARV) regimen to Gilead Sciences' Biktarvy (bictegravir/tenofovir alafenamide/emtricitabine) had a high rate of full suppression of the virus and no serious adverse health events a year later in the pooled results of four recent studies.

Researchers presented findings from the pooled results among senior participants of Studies 1844, 1878, 4030 and 4449 at the International AIDS Conference, which is being held virtually this week.

Between the studies, 140 participants were 65 years old or older. They had a median age of 68 years old. Eighty-six percent were men, and 88% were white. Upon entering the study, 22% had diabetes, 55% had high blood pressure, 24% had cardiovascular disease and 59% had irregular blood lipids.

All the seniors entered the study with a fully suppressed viral load thanks to a different ARV regimen, and then switched to Biktarvy.

Forty-eight weeks after making the switch, 92% (129 of 140) of the seniors had a fully suppressed viral load. None experienced virologic failure.

Biktarvy proved well tolerated. Eight percent (11 of 140) of the seniors experienced mild or moderate (Grade 1 or 2) drug-related adverse health events, and just 3% (4 of 140) discontinued the regimen due to such health events. None of the seniors experienced severe or life-threatening (Grade 3 or 4) adverse health events. The most common adverse health events were the common cold and pain in the joints, with 7% of the seniors experiencing each.

“As the number of older adults living with HIV grows, it’s critical to optimize therapy to fit the unique needs of this key population, including those with chronic conditions who may be on multiple medications,” presenter Moti Ramgopal, MD, of Midway Immunology and Research Center in Fort Pierce, Florida, said in a Gilead press release. “The data presented at AIDS 2020: Virtual showed that adults 65 years and older who switched to Biktarvy maintained viral suppression

without a significant impact on lipid levels such as cholesterol, weight or interactions with other drugs they may be taking for comorbidities.”

To read a press release about the study, [click here](#).

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