Taking Multiple Non-HIV Drugs Linked to Health Risks in Those With the Virus

These risks include hospitalization and death.

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People with HIV who take multiple non-antiretroviral (ARV) medications have a higher risk of hospitalization and death, aidsmap reports.

Publishing their findings in the journal AIDS, researchers at the Department of Veterans Affairs conducted a prospective study of 9,473 people with HIV and 39,812 closely matched controls who did not have the virus. The HIV-positive people were all on ARVs.

The investigators looked at the medications that the study members were taking in 2009 and analyzed their rates of hospitalization and death between 2010 and 2015.

Almost the entire cohort was male, and nearly two thirds of the overall group was between 50 and 64 years old. The HIV-positive individuals had a median CD4 count of 515.

After adjusting the data to account for various differences among the study members, including the severity of disease and demographic factors, the study authors found that taking two non-ARV medications, regardless of whether the individuals had the virus, was associated with a 51 percent increase in the risk of hospitalization, while taking five or more non-ARV medications was associated with a 52 percent increased risk. For each additional non-ARV medication individuals took, their risk of hospitalization relative to those taking fewer medications increased by 8 percent.

Taking at least two non-ARV medications was associated with a 20 percent increased risk of death among those with HIV and a 49 percent increased risk of death among those without the virus. Regardless of HIV status, taking five or more non-ARV medications was associated with a 43 percent increased mortality risk.

To read the aidsmap article, click here.

To read the study abstract, click here.

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