

Taking Multiple Non-HIV Meds Linked to Increased Health Risks

Known as polypharmacy, taking numerous medications has been linked to such risks in the general population as well.

March 12, 2018 By [Benjamin Ryan](#)

Among people with HIV, taking multiple medications in addition to their antiretroviral (ARV) regimen, known as polypharmacy, is associated with an increased risk of hospitalization and death. Such risks increase in tandem with a rising number of non-ARV medications.

Publishing their findings in the journal *AIDS*, researchers analyzed data on 9,473 people with HIV and 39,812 people without the virus who received care from the U.S. Veterans Affairs Healthcare System. The HIV-positive individuals were all on ARVs and had a fully suppressed viral load. The HIV-negative individuals were all taking at least one medication.

The researchers established the number of non-HIV medications that the study members took in 2009 and looked at data on hospitalization and mortality among them between 2010 and 2015, adjusting the data for age, sex, race and VACS Index (a measure of disease severity).

Among the HIV-positive and HIV-negative study members, a respective 67 percent and 71 percent were taking more than two non-ARV medications and a respective 34 percent and 39 percent were taking five or more such medications.

After adjusting for disease severity, the investigators found that taking more than two non-ARV medications and taking five or more such medications was associated with a respective 1.51-fold and 1.52-fold increased risk of hospitalization during the study's follow-up period; HIV status made no difference in these findings. Taking more than two medications was associated with a 1.43-fold increased risk of death.

In both the HIV-positive and HIV-negative groups, the risk of both hospitalization and death rose along with the number of non-ARV medications study members took.

To read the study abstract, [click here](#).

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

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